

THE CROSS AS A CENTRAL PERSPECTIVE
OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Theology
at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Christian F. Hilbig
May 1979

This dissertation, written by

Christian F. Hilbig

*under the direction of his Faculty Committee,
and approved by its members, has been presented
to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of
Theology at Claremont in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Faculty Committee

Howard Chinnell
Chairman

Ray Stierman

Joseph C. Haugh

Date Jan. 23, 1979

Joseph C. Haugh

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Howard Clinebell, Frank Kimper, Gerald Walcutt, and Milt Winkler, whose teaching and supervision challenged me to face honestly the pain in my life so that I could grow.

My thoughts go back in gratitude to Ernst Kasemann and Dieter Georgi who taught me that the New Testament is an exciting book, full with deep insights for today's existential questions.

I remember warmly that moment when the process of this dissertation was started while reading the sentence by Fritz Perls:

To die one's death
and to be reborn
is not easy.

The gratefulness, however, I feel toward Diane I cannot express appropriately. She accompanied me through it all and shared it deeply.

Christian F. Hilbig

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	
LIST OF DIAGRAMS	
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
FOCUS AND RATIONALE	1
The Problem in General	1
The Specific Problem of the Study	2
Hypothesis	5
Definitions of Terms Used	7
Pastoral theology	7
Perspective	9
The cross	10
Some Arguments Supporting the Hypothesis	14
Review of Different Perspectives Used by Other Authors	18
The formal perspective of ritual and priestly role	18
The pragmatic perspective of shepherding	20
The theological perspective of incarnation	22
NATURE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY	25
The Parameters of the Study	25
Nature of the Study	29
Tools of Inquiry	31
II. THE CROSS IS THE CENTRAL PAULINIC PERSPECTIVE--THE PRESENTATIONAL LEVEL OF THE CROSS	34
THE CROSS IN THE CHRISTIAN PROCLAMATION BEFORE PAUL	34

Chapter	Page
Did Jesus Interpret His Death at the Cross?	34
The Nature of Early Christian Traditions	35
Early Theologies Without the Cross . . .	37
The Death of Christ in Theology Before Paul	42
Findings	45
THE MODIFICATION OF THE TRADITION BY PAUL .	46
The Significance of the Cross	46
Paul's Use of His Tradition	52
Paul and Realized Eschatologies	54
Philippians 2:5-11	54
I Cor. 15:1-11	62
I Cor. 11:23ff.	65
Paul and Futuric Eschatologies	66
Rom. 3:24ff.	66
Gal. 1:4-5; Gal. 2:19-21	69
THE PRESENTATIONAL CONTENT OF THE CROSS . .	71
The Paradox Character of Christian Theology	72
The Anthropological Implication of the Cross	75
The Symbolic Background of the Cross . .	78
Summary	91
III. THE CROSS IS THE CENTRAL THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE--THE DISCURSIVE LEVEL OF THE CROSS	93
THE PARTIALITY OF THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES .	93
FOUR WAYS OF RELATING THE EMPIRICAL AND THE KERYGMATIC IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY .	100
The Forensic-Kerygmatic View	100
The Immanent-Kerygmatic View	103
The Forensic-Empirical View	106
The Immanent-Empirical View	108
THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CROSS	111
THE PARADOXICAL NATURE OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY	123

Chapter	Page
IV. THE CROSS IS THE CENTRAL PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE--THE EMPIRICAL LEVEL OF THE CROSS	128
HOLDING ON	129
In Theology	129
Being in Adam	129
A theology of glory	131
"Religion"	133
Sin and resistance	137
In Psychotherapy	138
Interrupting	138
The status quo	141
Self-concept realization	143
LETTING GO	148
In Theology	148
Christ	148
A theology of the cross	150
The view from below	156
Faith and surrender	158
In Psychotherapy	159
Experiencing	159
The "shadow"	162
The impasse	166
BEING TRANSFORMED	169
In Theology	169
The Spirit	169
Nos extras nos	171
The image of God	174
Growth and the center of life	176
In Psychotherapy	177
Exploding	177
The self	181
THE PARADOX OF GROWTH	185

	vii
Chapter	Page
V. CONCLUSIONS	188
THE IDENTITY OF THE PASTORAL COUNSELOR .	191
THE THEOLOGICAL IDENTIALS OF THE PASTORAL COUNSELOR	194
False Alternatives	194
Ultimate Concern	195
Revelation and Concealment	195
THE PASTORAL IDENTIALS OF THE PASTORAL COUNSELOR	197
Celebrating	198
Teaching	198
Serving	199
THE THERAPEUTIC IDENTIALS OF THE PASTORAL COUNSELOR	199
Honesty	200
Pain	200
Growth	201
BIBLIOGRAPHY	203

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration	Page
1. From Alfons Rosenberg, <u>Kreuzmeditation</u> (München: Kösel 1976), p. 26	82
2. From Carl G. Jung (ed.) <u>Man and His Symbols</u> (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), p. 80	85
3. From Wilhelm Bitter (ed.) <u>Die Wandlungen des Menschen</u> (Goettingen: Verlag für medizinische Psychologie, 1956), p. 88	87

LIST OF DIAGRAMS

Diagram	Page
1	90
2	99
3	112
4	119
5	147
6	165
7	185

ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses itself to the general field of pastoral theology. The current increase in methods of pastoral care and counseling calls for increased theological reflection. Pastoral disciplines are in danger of being trapped by faddism or moralism.

The thesis proposes the theological concept of the cross as a central perspective for pastoral theology. A perspective orders available data. It defines their mutual interrelationship. The thesis demonstrates that the cross throws a new light on the available knowledge within the field of pastoral theology.

This study relates pastoral theology to theology in a more general sense. The nature of the study is, therefore, a theoretical one. It explores the theological and anthropological dimension of the cross which is transmitted in the form of written documents. Three aspects of the cross will be explored.

The presentational aspect of the cross covers its kerygmatic and mythical side. This is illuminated by historic-critical analysis of Paul's letters. This is amplified by inquiry into the symbolism of the cross.

The discursive aspect of the cross consists of a systematic exploration of the construction of pastoral theology based on the findings of the previous aspect. Two major thrusts within this discipline are described and juxtaposed. Both the kerygmatic and the empirical approaches are subdivided and evaluated according to

their unique placement in the perspective of the cross. This perspective requires a convergence of both thrusts. It will be demonstrated how this convergence forms the matrix for the theoretical model of pastoral theology.

The empirical aspect of the cross explores the nature of human change. Religious conversion in the perspective of the cross is compared with the change process in psychodynamic therapy. Different stages of these processes are identified and paralleled.

It was found that the cross as a theological perspective gained significance through Paulinic theology. Earlier theologies placed a decisive emphasis on resurrection. This end of history blots out the present experience of the believer and places her/him beyond the ambivalence and pain of ongoing reality. Paul's emphasis of the cross links the Christian experience firmly to this earth. The believer is part of the ongoing process of life. She/he is stripped of religious possessions and a special privileged status. The cross defines Christian existence as "sympathic." Thus, it is set apart from the ancient religious ideal of "apathy." "Sympathy" with this earth calls for an acceptance of pain, participation in one's own ongoing process, and a solidarity with human sufferings.

The symbolic background of the cross amplifies these Paulinic statements. The connotations male-female, positive-negative, and life-death are all present in this one symbol. Thus, it stands for the twofold nature of life and represents transformation, spiritual change and metamorphosis through surrender.

The perspective of the cross calls for an ongoing dialogue of two different thrusts within pastoral theology: the vertical-kerygmatic and the horizontal-empirical. Both are tied together in a paradoxical relationship. The study of the gospel leads to empirical reality as the realm of Christian existence. Christian existence in the midst of empirical reality leads to God as revealed in Christ who creates out of nothing and justifies the unjust. A model of pastoral theology needs to be of a three-dimensional nature incorporating the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of existence.

A comparison of the paradoxical theory of change in psychotherapy and conversion in the perspective of the cross demonstrate one stage of the dialogue in pastoral theology mentioned above.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

FOCUS AND RATIONALE

The Problem in General

This thesis addresses itself to the general field of pastoral theology. Hiltner placed new emphasis on this discipline and contributed greatly to its relevancy.¹ It consists of a concept of theological significance which is brought to bear upon the operations and functions of the pastor. Although the latter include preaching, Christian education, and administration, it is the pastor's function as pastoral counselor which will be the focus of this contribution to the general subject. The recent growth of new methods and approaches in the overall field of pastoral counseling demands a renewed inquiry into the central theological perspective of pastoral theology. A prominent voice among those who call for further work in this area is Browning.

The search for method in pastoral care and Christian living is probably healthy, but it must be accompanied by keen theological thinking if it is to avoid

¹Seward Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958).

the capriciousness of faddism and the stultification of moralism and formalism.²

Faddism or formalism are both signs for a loss of a wholistic perspective in pastoral theology. This perspective integrates the transmitted truth of divine revelation and the insights gained from contemporary sciences. Pastoral theology needs to be informed by both. Any lack in this respect leads to lopsidedness. Much work has been done gathering information from sciences, particularly from the fields of personality and psychotherapy. It is this study's intention to develop a theological perspective which aids the minister in clarifying his identity as a pastoral theologian. Moore put the problem this way:

Without a theological point of view for one's practice, the minister becomes a social scientist or some kind of professional other than what he or she can be.... Can an identity for ministry be formulated that is both theological and scientific, historical and contemporary? In short the problem is one of formulating a practical theology that will clarify the nature of contemporary ministry and the context from which it is to be practiced.³

The Specific Problem of the Study

This study is limited to some of the groundwork of pastoral theology. It is solely concerned with the central

²Don S. Browning, "New Trends in Pastoral Care: The Search for Method in Religious Living," Christian Century, XC (September 5, 1973), 850.

³Allen Moore, "The Place of Scientific Models and Theological Reflection in the Practice of Ministry," Pastoral Psychology, XXII:210 (January 1971), 26.

perspective which can serve as foundation for a later explicit development of a pastoral theology. The study is part of a preface for a pastoral theology. It is not an attempt to formulate a specific pastoral theology. The question of the explicit identity of the minister as pastoral theologian is also beyond the scope of this study. However, the central perspective developed in this study is suited to aid in the formulation of a general outline of pastoral theology or of pastoral identity.

In order to qualify as central perspective, a theological concept needs to express appropriately the uniqueness of the Christian faith. In addition, the concept needs to meet the following three requirements if it is to serve as criterion for pastoral theology.⁴

(1) It needs to represent acts or events or functions of a pastoral nature. It should refer to direct experience of a movement which is brought about by exposure to the gospel or its representative institutions or persons. This first requirement is concerned with the empirical implication of this theological concept. Empirical is to be understood,

⁴I am indebted to James N. Lapsley, Salvation and Health (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), for the following distinction of three interrelated modes of knowing, the empirical, the discursive, and the presentational mode. He in turn utilized considerations of Susanne K. Langer and Daniel D. Williams.

in the broad sense of the term as referring to direct experience of some kind, not in the narrow sense of following some agreed-upon rules of mathematics or logic, though this is included.⁵

(2) It needs to lend itself to systematic reflection and offer principles around which the data of pastoral theology can be systematically organized. It should provide the discipline with an epistemological key which provides an overview of the field making it easily accessible. This second requirement is concerned with the discursive level of the concept. On this level

aspects of the Christian story can be logically clarified, such as in the development of theories of atonement, though these aspects cannot be either verified or refuted.⁶

(3) The concept needs to penetrate the presentational level of pastoral theology. This level embraces the revealed truths of the Christian tradition. These truths are unique since they combine intuitive and mythical elements with historical events. This level contains

the Judeo-Christian story of salvation; it is not subject to refutation or verification by logical or empirical procedures, though some aspects of it can be clarified by discursive reason.⁷

These requirements stipulate that the perspective be at once consistent with the empirical data available to pastoral theology and with revelation as it is witnessed to by

⁵Ibid., p. 12.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., pp. 11-12.

the biblical documents.⁸

Hypothesis

It is my hypothesis that the cross of Christ offers itself as a central perspective for the construction of a pastoral theology since it meets all three of the above mentioned requirements. The presentational aspect of the cross places this discipline in the mainstream of revelation. The discursive aspect of the cross provides a systematic outline which helps to correlate the various data available to pastoral theology. The empirical aspect safeguards the uniqueness of pastoral theology. This unique contribution consists of the fact that pastoral theology gains its theological concepts from observation of empirical reality.

Within the whole body of divinity, what is distinctive about the operation-centered inquiries such as pastoral theology is that their theological conclusions, or theory or basic principles, emerge from reflection primarily on acts or events or functions from a particular perspective.⁹

In order to clarify this hypothesis, I suggest the modern scientific model of field theory.¹⁰ It can be illustrated by the iron filings on a sheet of paper with a magnet placed underneath this sheet. The filings converge towards

⁸For a discussion of revelation and the possibility of its validation, see below, pp. 95ff. and pp. 194ff.

⁹Hiltner, p. 20.

¹⁰Hiltner uses this example in a different context, *ibid.*, pp. 57f.

one or two points and order themselves in a definite pattern. Theoretically, the sheet of paper can be as large as possible and the iron filings will be ordered and affected to some degree in a considerable distance. Yet, there will come the point where the filings are beyond the "field" of the magnet and stay unaffected by it.

The sheet with the iron filings resembles the empirical level of the cross. I suggest that the field of Christian theology is ordered in the pattern of the cross and that all data available on an experiential level are somehow influenced by this force. Somehow they reflect the power of the cross to varying degrees.

The force of the magnet, the sheet and the iron filings can be described in their relationship to each other. Abstract thinking and logic are needed to penetrate the interdependence of patterns and forces and to describe this process reasonably. It is my suggestion that in pastoral theology, the power of the cross, its relationship to the different empirical acts, events and forms of faith, and its relationship to the (invisible) source of this power, God, forms the discursive level of the cross.

The presentational level of the cross represents the hidden magnet. It is not directly accessible to discursive reason, but its influence can be felt throughout the whole field.

Definitions of Terms Used

(1) Pastoral theology. It is a branch of the body of theology like biblical, systematic, or historical theology. According to the Greek origin, the word "theology" means "talk about God or divine things."¹¹ A theological discipline evolved in its first forms in medieval time. It is a public account of the Christian faith with all philosophical and scientific tools available to a given epoch. Pastoral theology is, therefore, the discipline which utilizes the transmitted revelation of God in Christ and the scientific knowledge available to our time to cogitate over the pastoral acts, events, or functions.

Hiltner has given an excellent negative description of pastoral theology.¹² He emphasized that it is not merely the practice of pastoral acts. "The practice or functions or events are examined reflectively and thus lead to theory."¹³ Neither is pastoral theology merely applied theology.

Such a notion implies that principles are acquired through, for example, study of the Bible or of Christian doctrine and that these are applied in one-way fashion to acts and functions. We acknowledge fully that study of Bible and doctrine results in principles that may and

¹¹cf. Gerhard Ebeling, "Theologie," in Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (Tübingen: Mohr, 1957-65), VI, 754-769.

¹²Hiltner, pp. 22-24.

¹³Ibid., p. 22.

must be applied. We assert further, however, that the process moves the other way also, that adequate critical study of events from some significant perspective makes creative contributions to theological understanding.¹⁴

Pastoral theology avoids, therefore, some of the shortcomings of European and American theology. The former considered "practical theology" mainly an applied theology. Theological consideration was placed above empirical research. In the United States the opposite can be observed. Experience and empirical studies replaced theological inquiry. Pastoral theology in the definition of this study has a wholistic orientation integrating theological reflection and experience of pastoral acts or events. This presupposes the assumption that the study of theological concepts opens up experience if we bring experiential questions to it. It also presupposes that the study of concrete form of human experience is theological if we bring theological questions to it.

As mentioned above, this study will limit its observations and reflections to that part of pastoral theology which is concerned with the pastoral care and counseling aspect. I assume, however, that the perspective elaborated in this study can be a guiding principle for other areas of pastoral theology like preaching, teaching and administration.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 22-23.

(2) Perspective. My understanding of perspective is informed by insights of Gestalt psychology. There it was found that we never perceive the whole picture of data available to our senses. The organism orders instantly these data in foreground and background. Human perception, therefore, is always perspectival. Certain data are selected and receive a higher attention than others, and the latter are perceived in relation to the former.

The term "perspective" suggests, therefore, that a certain point of view is needed for perceiving given data. This perspective renders some data more vital to this point of view than others. It implies, further, that not only those data immediately contributing to this point of view are of vital importance. The other data, which go beyond or against this point of view are equally necessary to provide contrast and life to the whole. The perspective is, therefore, to some degree present in everything perceived.

The energy and excitement invested by the perceiver is directly related to the degree of presence of the perspective in the perceived. It qualifies the relations to other persons or objects. His relationship to a given person or subject will be more meaningful and vital if the perspective is present in this relationship to a high degree. Thus, the perspective serves to order the field of study in a way that is basic to it and not something tacked on.

(3) The cross. The term "cross" as it is used in this study refers to a theological concept which is gained through theological reflection about the historical cross event. It tells a story, serves as ecumenical symbol and has the anthropological implication of pain and change. This term plugs into a rich theological tradition which originated with Paul and played a significant role in reformation theology. It was rediscovered in early dialectical theology. Moltmann most recently presented a systematic overview of this concept.¹⁵

The "cross" reveals God as he has shown himself in the event of the crucifixion of Christ. By nature, this revelation is offensive because it offends natural, rational, and moral recognition of God.

(Faith) finds in the crucified Christ the contradiction on several levels: it finds the contradiction of the God as revealed in the law and as recognized practically in the works of the law. For Jesus died through the judgement of the law as a blasphemer. It finds there the contradiction and liberation of the so-called gods as worshipped in the political theologies of political religions. For Jesus died, justly or unjustly, at the cross the political death of a rebel. Finally it finds the contradiction of the God who revealed himself through his works in creation and history. For Jesus died in godlessness.¹⁶

Yet, this offensive event is claimed by Paul as the uniquely Christian revelation of God. Luther developed an explicit

¹⁵cf. Jürgen Moltmann, Der gekreuzigte Gott (München: Kaiser, 1972)

¹⁶Ibid., p. 71 (my translation).

theology of the cross.

Theologia crucis is not a chapter of theology, but a certain kind of theology. The cross of Christ is here not only of importance for the question and certainty of salvation, rather it is the perspective center of all theological statements. It belongs into the doctrine of God as well as into the doctrine of the work of Christ. Even more, there is no dogmatic "locus" possible, for which it would not form the perspective. In this sense, Luther's theology claims to be theologia cruce.¹⁷

The "Heidelberg disputation" of April 1518 develops Luther's concept of a theology of the cross in great clarity.¹⁸ It is basically the introduction of a paradox into theology. Anyone trying to find God only through visible things of creation is not worth being called a theologian. But he who allows God to make himself known through humanity, weakness and foolishness is a theologian.

From now on it could never be enough for a man, nor could it benefit him to know God in his glory and majesty unless he knows him at the same time in the humility and the shame of the cross. In this way he destroys the wisdom of the wise and brings to nought the understanding of the prudent, "Verily thou art a hidden God." (Isa. 45:15)¹⁹

Bonhoeffer is an excellent contemporary witness for a theology of the cross. Regin Preter has demonstrated

¹⁷Walter von Loewenich, Luthers Theologia Crucis (Witten: Luther, 1967), p. 18. (My translation).

¹⁸Martin Luther, Early Theological Works (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 290-94. For a further discussion of this disputation see Loewenich; Paul Althaus, Die Theologie Martin Luthers (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1963), pp. 36f; Moltmann, pp. 193-199.

¹⁹Luther, pp. 290f.

Bonhoeffer's deep indebtedness to the early Luther.²⁰ The basic concepts of Bonhoeffer, such as his distinction between "religion" and "faith," his search for "concrete formation," and the "view from below," cannot be understood properly without the background of a theology of the cross.²¹

Yet, in this study the term "cross" refers not only to the cross of Christ. Every christology implies a specific anthropology. The term "cross" also refers, therefore, to the discipleship under the cross. The cross of Christ and the cross of the Christian cannot be identified, neither can they be separated. Faith in the crucified Christ sets a process in motion.

Again, Paul is a primary witness for this movement which was brought about through discipleship in the light of the cross.

Paul follows in his apostolic work the mission of Christ. This leads him into the discipleship of the cross through inner and outer tribulations. He carries the death of Christ on his body, so that the life of Christ might be revealed. "So the death worketh in us, but life in you." (2 Cor. 4:12) These are not self-chosen sufferings. Neither is this an attempt to reach a deeper communion with Christ through sufferings. Neither is it an imitation of the sufferings of Christ. These are apostolic sufferings and the cross of the witness. . . . Because he follows the mission of Christ, Paul takes "his" cross upon himself and reveals the strength of Christ through his weakness and the life of

²⁰Regin Prenter, "Bonhoeffer and the Young Luther," in Ronald Smith (ed.) World Come of Age (London: Collins, 1967), pp. 161-181.

²¹Ibid., p. 170.

the resurrected through his daily dying.²²

The term "cross" also connotes, therefore, the dark and hidden aspects in the life of persons. It describes a unique way of facing pain, sin, and unauthenticity, and dealing with them in the light of the cross of Christ.

This definition perceives the cross in the light of the resurrection. Without the resurrection, the cross would have been the tragic end of an individual. The resurrection qualifies this death as the revelation of the creative power and the life of God. It establishes its existential relevance since it is now the cross "for us." Moltmann expresses this point well.

The New Testament focuses in all its variety in the event of the cross and resurrection. It is one event and one person. The addition "cross and resurrection" talks merely about the temporal sequence of language, not about separate facts. Cross and resurrection are not facts on the same level. The first term connotes an historical, the second term an eschatological event of Jesus. The center is not "cross and resurrection," but the resurrection of the crucified, which qualifies the death as death for us, and the cross of the resurrected, which reveals his resurrection from the dead to the dying.²³

Even though cross and resurrection are one event, this thesis prefers the term "cross" in order to describe the unique Christian perspective proposed. One reason for this is the common use of the term in this function in other literature. The second, deeper reason lies in the

²²Moltmann, p. 58. (My translation).

²³Ibid., p. 189. (My translation).

ecumenical and historical potency of the cross as the central symbol of Christianity. "Resurrection" is common religious currency and not unique and descriptive of the total impact of Jesus. The cross on the other hand embodies like a nucleus the whole gestalt of Christ.²⁴

Some Arguments Supporting the Hypothesis

Above,²⁵ I claimed that the central perspective needs to participate in the divine revelation of Christ which is the central perspective beyond all theological disciplines. Today, the biblical disciplines are aware of their need for a central perspective.

Modern research established the fact that biblical documents and theologies formulated the gospel with the help of contemporary philosophical, religious, and ethical concepts. All of those show different profiles and occasionally assume contrary theological positions. The New Testament does not provide the scholar with a "pure source," which could be used to evaluate these theologies.²⁶

²⁴See below pp. 14f.

²⁵See p. 4.

²⁶See Günter Bornkamm, "Herrenmahl und Kirche bei Paulus," in his Studien zu Antike und Urchristentum (München: Kaiser, 1963), pp. 138-76; Ernst Käsemann, "Unity and Multiplicity in the New Testament Doctrine of the Church," in his New Testament Questions of Today (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 252-59.

Koester has dealt with this issue and the fact that early Christianity in its entirety is a syncretistic phenomenon.²⁷ The resurrection of Christ may serve as an example. When early Christians talked about Jesus as resurrected, they did not use a uniquely Christian or new concept in order to describe the strange events they had experienced. They used a concept out of the late Judaic setting. The Hellenistic world was also filled with divine men who were proclaimed as resurrected. One of these was Apollonius of Thyana. Determined by the setting they lived in, those who heard the term "resurrection," understood something quite different. What ultimately determines whether the particular concept is apt to carry the Christian gospel appropriately or not?²⁸ A formal criterion, i.e., the legitimation by the canon, the authority of the apostles, the early or Jesuanic use, is insufficient to render this service. Only a theological criterion is appropriate.

According to Koester, the biblical disciplines do have such a criterion in the cross as a theological concept which is the focus of the revelation of God in Christ. The cross alone is apt, because

the cross of Jesus shatters the theological security which is implicit in the intention of the transmitted

²⁷ Helmut Koester, "Haeretiker im Urchristentum als Theologisches Problem," in Erich Dinkler (ed.), Zeit und Geschichte (Tübingen: Mohr, 1964), pp. 61ff.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 68.

language and therefore in the inherited self-understanding (even a Christian one).²⁹

The recent debate around the cross underlines its significance as a central theological criterion.³⁰

Moltmann has developed the cross as a theological perspective of systematic theology. He writes:

The death of Jesus at the cross is the center of all of Christian theology. It is not the only theme of theology, but something like an entrance to its problems and answers on earth. All Christian statements about God, creation, sin, and death point to the crucified. All Christian answers about history, the church, faith, and sanctification come from the crucified.³¹

He shows the significance of the perspective of the cross for the doctrine of God, christology, the doctrine of trinity, eschatology and anthropology.³²

These side-glimpses into biblical and systematic theology establish the fact that the cross is indeed used as a central perspective. In pastoral theology Werner Jetter reviewed the symbols and rituals of contemporary worship practice. He used the cross as the central Christian symbol for a reflection about the center of all other symbols and

²⁹Ibid., p. 72 (My translation).

³⁰See Hans Conzelmann (ed.), Zur Bedeutung des Todes Jesu (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1967); Jürgen Roloff, "Kritische Überlegungen zur gegenwärtigen Diskussion um das Kreuz Jesu," in his Die Heilsbedeutung von Kreuz und Auferstehung Jesu Christi (Berlin: Luther, 1970), pp. 51-84; Bernd Klappert, Diskussion um Kreuz und Auferstehung (Wuppertal: Aussaat, 1967)

³¹Moltmann, p. 189. (My translation).

³²Ibid., pp. 184-267.

rituals. He writes:

The symbol of the cross in worship points not only to the one who is believed in, it, also, decides about what is believed: it becomes the factual criterion for all possible metaphorical language.³³

In each case mentioned, this perspective helps to illuminate the central Christian focus of perceiving and to sort foreground from background material. I am aware of the fact that there are other perspectives used. I am satisfied, however, to show that there is one theological tradition in Protestant theology of considerable significance which utilizes the cross as the central perspective. It offers itself as a critical as well as an affirming tool which helps Christian theology to use philosophical and scientific concepts properly without losing its identity. In this sense, the cross has a powerfully demythologizing effect in that it strips philosophical and scientific concepts of their implicit mythological claims. It prevents these carriers of the gospel from taking the place of the matter at stake, which can only be the revelation of God in Christ. On the other hand, the cross frees Christian theology to immerse itself fully into the contemporary body of knowledge so as not to degrade it to a subservient role.

Luther claims: "The cross probes everything."³⁴

³³Werner Jetter, Symbol and Ritual (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), pp. 286ff. There are also further references and explications of the cross as criterion.

³⁴Martin Luther, Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Boehlhaus, 1883), V, 179.

And Käsemann explains:

In theological language, the final decisions are not made in the realm of language. There, they only come to word. They are made, when we fall into arrogance or despair, or when we hear the call to discipleship and true humanness,--where our will is at stake. This is the case in the encounter with the crucified. . . . For us, the cross is the only critical power of each person on earth, because it determines existence as a whole, i.e., together with our thoughts and language also our will.³⁵

Such a wholistic thrust of the cross encourages me to assume that it will help pastoral theology in the current identity crisis.

Review of Different Perspectives Used by Other Authors

Authors have used certain criteria both implicitly and explicitly as guidelines for an evaluation of their data of pastoral care.

(1) The formal perspective of ritual and priestly role. Clebsch and Jaekle have done pastoral theology a great favor by gathering the rich heritage of this discipline. They found that pastoral theology is a syncretistic phenomenon. In this respect, their finding is similar to the result of historic-critical biblical theology.³⁶ They write:

³⁵Ernst Käsemann, "Die Heilsbedeutung des Todes Jesu nach Paulus," in Conzelmann, p. 15. (My translation).

³⁶See above p. 14.

In every historic epoch, pastoring has utilized--and by utilizing has helped to advance and transform--the psychology and psychologies current in that epoch.³⁷

The question arises whether there is a unique element which sets pastoral care apart from other ways of psychologically oriented caring. Implicitly, they arrive at such a perspective. It is fundamentally formal in its nature. The authors claim pastoral ritual and the priestly role to be such criteria.

Probably more than anything else, this ritual establishment, renewal, and exercise of the Pastor's role as a representative Christian person, bearing the resources, wisdom, and authority of the Christian faith, have set Pastoral Care apart from the work of other helping persons.³⁸

I reject the assumption that pastoral ritual, the priestly role, or any formal criteria can serve as central perspective in pastoral theology. It is true that the context of ritual can ensure the proper pastoral function of counseling. On the other hand, it is equally conceivable that ritual is a handicap to proper pastoral care. One example is an approach to pastoral care which limits itself entirely to liturgical functions as baptism, communion, marriage ceremony, and funeral. It refuses to be influenced by contemporary sciences of personality and counseling. This does not further the appropriate practice of pastoral

³⁷William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (Boston: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 68f.

³⁸Ibid., p. 70.

care.

Another example is the practice of indulgences in Luther's time. This practice was very satisfying if evaluated according to pastoral ritual and priestly function. Yet, its theological foundation was very questionable.

Finally, each formal perspective falls under the critique of Paul in Gal. 2. It is too close to the formal criteria of the "law" to be of theological relevance for a Christian theology. Paul's opponents assumed that the formal criteria of ritualistic circumcision would guarantee the proper faith of the newly converted Hellenistic churches. The latter seemed to them the adequate distinction of a pagan way of life. Paul argued from a theological basis. For Christians, there is no formal guarantee for salvation, but solely the living faith which participates in the cross of Christ.³⁹

(2) The pragmatic perspective of shepherding.

Seward Hiltner has proposed shepherding as one central perspective of pastoral theology. It is the English translation of the older term "poimenics." This term referred to certain acts of the pastor while others were labeled teaching ("catechetics"), or preaching ("homiletics"). The term shepherding is, therefore, taken from the pastoral functions and has a functional, pragmatic connotation. Hiltner

³⁹Gal. 2:19.

assumes two kinds of meanings of the term shepherding. One is attitudinal. It claims that shepherding is "in some degree present in everything done by the pastor or church."⁴⁰ The other meaning is categorical and assumes "that shepherding, although much, is not everything. It is properly dominant when need and readiness so indicate, but that something else may properly be dominant under other conditions."⁴¹

Hiltner employs two other perspectives, which he assumes to be central for pastoral theology as well: communicating and organizing. So in a way, he does not use the word perspective in the same sense it is used here. He gives it more of a descriptive meaning than the critical, inquisitive meaning implied here. Yet, his definition is unclear at this point because he uses shepherding occasionally as a critical tool. In one instance he rejects "discipline" as subject of pastoral theology because it does not totally agree with the shepherding perspective.⁴² In one instance he defines the latter more clearly as the good-Samaritan principle in operation.⁴³

Without arguing with Hiltner's assumptions in this respect, I generalize the problem and ask: is the good-Samaritan principle apt to serve as the central perspective

⁴⁰Hiltner, p. 18.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., p. 67.

⁴³Ibid.

of pastoral theology? This would state that any pastoral act or event which brings help now is an integral part of the identity of the pastoral theologian.

I think that this perspective is more apt than the formalistic perspective mentioned above.⁴⁴ Yet, I find it still lacking. If the pastor sees himself as the shepherd who brings help now like the good Samaritan, he has indeed a hard time seeing his identity different from that of the psychologist, social worker, or doctor. The latter problem, however, is an apt description of the pastoral counselor's dilemma in our day. If he/she renders a helping service and might be paid by public or insurance funds, how is he/she to clarify his different identity as pastoral counselor? The shortcoming of this perspective consists in its lack regarding the presentational level of pastoral theology. Aside from the parable used by the historical Jesus, this criterion is not directly derived from the core of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and lacks, therefore, a deeper theological dimension. I conclude that the purely pragmatic perspective of shepherding is not comprehensive enough, according to the above mentioned requirements, in order to serve as pastoral theology's central perspective.

(3) The theological perspective of incarnation.

Oden suggested that "the implicit ontological assumption of

⁴⁴See above pp. 18ff.

all effective psychotherapy is made explicit in the Christian proclamation."⁴⁵ For Oden, this proclamation or kerygma centers in the event of incarnation.

When the Apostles' Creed confesses its trust in the One who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified and buried, it freights a radical affirmation of God's determination to share fully in our human conditions. . . .

Although the witness to the incarnation is subject to various distortions, it nevertheless remains central to Christian faith, since it asserts that the Word or logos of God, divine love, is historical and becomes an event (not merely an idea) in the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.⁴⁶

The incarnation of God in Christ revealed the accepting ground of reality which is implicitly mediated by effective psychotherapy.

It is important to note that Oden's study has a different purpose than mine. He has the intention of proposing an analogy between the implicit assumptions of psychotherapy and the explicit proclamation of the kerygma. Nevertheless, it is obvious to question his proposed focus of the kerygma about its aptitude as a central perspective of pastoral theology.

This question needs to be answered positively. Oden's concept of incarnation meets all three requirements necessary for such a perspective. It satisfies the empirical, the discursive, and the presentational level of

⁴⁵Thomas C. Oden, Kerygma and Counseling (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 24.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 52.

knowing. The perspective suggested in this study is consistent with Oden's concept. Yet, in some important aspects, it is more inclusive.

(a) The concept of the cross is more concise than the concept of incarnation. Like a lense, it gathers the different aspects of incarnation in one focal point. At the same time, it expresses God's deity and humanity, Christ's love and acceptance, man's despair and resistance, the justification of the sinner and the call for a new life.

(b) The concept of the cross is more uniquely Christian than the concept of incarnation. The antique world was full of men and heros who were claimed to be incarnated gods. It is, therefore, not particularly unique that Jesus was proclaimed as God incarnate. Rather, it was unique and deeply offensive that the incarnate God was crucified. The cross qualified the kind of incarnation the Christian faith proclaimed! The cross is, therefore, the perspective which determines the appropriate or inappropriate talk of incarnation.

(c) The cross is used more generally as perspective in theology than incarnation. It is, therefore, more appropriate to use a perspective which is commonly used in theology than to establish an isolated perspective for pastoral theology.

NATURE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The Parameters of the Study

Above⁴⁷ I have limited this study to the preface of a pastoral theology. This implies that I will unfold the nature of the cross as a perspective for pastoral theology. The discussion of the application of this perspective to specific areas of pastoral theology will be general and limited. Emphasis will be laid on a description of the general thrust of pastoral theology as it is highlighted by the perspective of the cross. To clarify this point, I return to the example of field theory.⁴⁸ It is not primarily the task of this study to describe the shape, size, and quality of specific configurations of iron filings. Neither is emphasized the relationship of different strands of filings to each other, their distance, mutual dependency, etc. However, the overall shape, thrust, and appearance of the field and its center will be discussed.

The study is of a general nature. Hiltner called for this ground-work as an important task of pastoral theology.

It is important to understand, however, that the specialized scholar in any branch of theology does not simply engage in more and more minute and detailed investigation of the Bible, or of doctrine, or of church

⁴⁷See above pp. 2f.

⁴⁸See above pp. 5-6.

history, or of shepherding. He does have an obligation for such detailed investigation. But he has an equal obligation to relate his investigation to other branches of theology and to theology in the more general sense. . . . What makes any scholar a theologian is the combination of specialized scholarship with theological relatedness and relevance.⁴⁹

In order to render this service, the study has to venture into three different domains: the domain of historical theology, which deals with an appropriate understanding of revelation; the domain of pastoral theology, which deals specifically with the variety of counseling opportunities of the pastor and their relevance in the light of revelation; and finally the domain of empirical sciences of personality and psychotherapy, which offer contemporary ways of thinking and acting as carriers of the good news of Christ. It is obvious that pastoral theology relates to both, revelation and the current sciences. This has to be understood as integration and not as application. It is illegitimate to take revelation as the constant variable and apply it to the sciences of personality and vice versa.⁵⁰ The service rendered by pastoral theology is more aptly described as rediscovery. The elements of kerygma are discovered within sciences and the claim of sciences are illuminated by the fulfillment of revelation.⁵¹

⁴⁹Hiltner, p. 34.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 36.

⁵¹Compare the basic hypothesis of Oden, p. 24.

In order to address itself to all three domains, the cross as a perspective needs to be informed in three modes of knowledge: the presentational, the discursive, and the empirical.⁵² My inquiry into the cross as a perspective for pastoral theology is organized around these three modes of knowing.

(1) For the presentational level of the cross, I turn to historical theology. The reason for this is my understanding of the presentational mode of knowing in Christian theology. Lapsley counts only "the intuitive and mythic elements in the Christian tradition" among this mode.⁵³ I include these elements and the historical element of the revelation, which is uniquely Christian and elementary to it. However, I will point out the intuitive and mythic elements captured in the historic element.

The treatment of this level will focus nearly entirely on the theology of Paul. This has several reasons. (a) Paul is the theologian who explicitly declares the cross to be the center of his theology. (b) He is the main biblical witness of the theological tradition of which I consider myself a part. This tradition is Lutheran Protestantism. (c) It is not the task of the design of this study, which is of an exploratory nature, to prove exhaustively

⁵²See above pp. 3-4.

⁵³Lapsley, p. 11.

that the cross is the only perspective possible for pastoral theology or the New Testament documents. The study will rest content with establishing the fact that the cross is indeed, for Paul, the central perspective of his theology.

(2) The discursive level of the cross will be discussed in relation to the major contributions to pastoral theology in recent years. The claim of the presentational level, that reality bears the form of the cross, will be logically clarified through the example of a theory of pastoral theology. The unique potential of the cross will be demonstrated, which integrates logically conflicting theories and corrects their shortcomings through such correlation. Again, due to the exploratory character of the study, completeness is disregarded. Rather, it was the task to represent basically conflicting views of pastoral theology. Eduard Thurneysen, Peter Homans, Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., and James Lapsley were chosen as such representatives. The discursive level of the cross, as treated in the study, will highlight the cross' contribution to a construction of a general theory of pastoral theology.

(3) The empirical level of the cross will be discussed in a two-fold way. (a) The anthropological implications of the cross, its impact on human experience and change, will be discussed from a theological perspective. Two prominent theologians of the theological tradition who have both been deeply influenced by the theology of Paul

mentioned above will serve as witnesses to this level of the cross. These theological representatives are Martin Luther and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

(b) The experience of the cross in psychotherapy, a theory of human change and of personality development, will be outlined. This secular aspect of the cross is based on data from the depth-psychological tradition of psychotherapy. I include in this tradition Neo-Freudians like Karen Horney, Fritz Riemann, the psychology of C. G. Jung, and mainly the Gestalt psychotherapy of Fritz Perls. This tradition has in common a high regard for the symbolic function of the psyche and an emphasis on dream-work. Similar to Roberto Assagioli, I assume that the different contributions in this tradition are not contradictory. Rather, the opposite is true. They have mutually challenged each other and brought about modern humanistic psychology.

These two strands, the theological and the empirical, will be compared with each other. An analogy will be described from the perspective of the cross.

Nature of the Study

This study is of a theoretical nature. The empirical data which flow into the study are not the result of a narrowly defined, controlled study, but are the outcome of a more broadly defined, less objective experience with faith and psychotherapy. This experience is transmitted in

the form of written documents. This implies that the inquiry is of an exploratory design. It intends to prove that certain dimensions of knowing the cross exist. It points to the fact that the witnesses to these dimensions usually have a key function in their specific tradition. It proves logically that the cross meets the requirements which a central perspective of pastoral theology should meet. It will describe the basic thrust and implications of the cross as a perspective of pastoral theology.

This implies that the thesis leaves a certain space for subjectivity. This is not a shortcoming in my view. Any study entering the realm of theology and of faith must, by necessity, penetrate the realm of confession which has a strong, subjectively biased element.

I will clarify this point by the example of the use of Paulinic theology. Later I will demonstrate that Paul claimed the cross as the center of the revelation he received from the Lord. There are some historical data which support Paul's claim. As mentioned above, the cross is indeed unique among contemporary religious claims. It is historically verifiable. Yet, the claim that it most aptly describes the whole gestalt of the revelation of God in Christ, is itself the result of faith and only accessible by faith.

This subjective orientation of some of the sources used in the study allows, however, for an objective inquiry

into its subject. It cannot be proven objectively that the cross is the center of God's revelation in Christ. I can prove, however, beyond doubt that Paul himself claimed this to be so. Further, it can be demonstrated clearly how Paul understood the cross and how he saw its effect on theology and anthropology. Within the subjective, confessional parameters the study raises, therefore, a claim for objectivity.

Tools of Inquiry

The different levels of inquiry into the concept of the cross require different tools.

(1) The presentational level calls for an analysis of the historical documents of Paul's theology. In order to reach a satisfying degree of objectivity, I will utilize the method of historic-critical analysis. This approach studies documents in the light of contemporary documents which help clarify their particular setting. The light which is thrown from the setting on the text sharpens the understanding of its intention, point of main effort, and relevancy.

This historical analysis will start with an exploration of pre-Paulinic theologies. The place and function of the cross in these theologies will be pointed out. A second step of inquiry will focus on those Paulinic passages which explicitly or implicitly deal with the cross as perspective in theology. Since the setting of most of these statements is in controversial theology, the background of a particular

statement will be illuminated. This includes a brief description of the theological profile of the opposed theologies.

An analysis of the mythical and intuitive elements of the cross will conclude the exploration of the presentational level.

(2) The discursive level will be explored in a synthetic way. Different thrusts of pastoral theology will be introduced. The perspective of the cross will place them into a theoretical model of pastoral theology, synthesizing their different focal points.

The basis for this synthesis is provided by the findings of the presentational level of the cross. It calls for a synthesis and reconciliation between the vertical and the horizontal beams of the cross. This understanding of the cross forms the matrix for the theoretical model of pastoral theology. Two main streams in pastoral theology will be juxtaposed: the kerygmatic and the empirical thrust of pastoral theology. Both will be subdivided and evaluated according to their unique placement in the perspective of the cross.

The theoretical model of pastoral theology in the perspective of the cross will help to draw up a short map of the whole field of pastoral theology in its different forms and functions.

(3) The empirical level of the cross will be

treated by means of analogy. A theory of human change in the light of the cross will be paralleled to a change theory in the light of depth-psychological therapy. A general movement from fallen or unauthentic existence to a redeemed and whole existence will be outlined. Certain key words from both traditions will be coordinated with each other.

This will demonstrate that both traditions are characterized by an analogous process. In this process three stages can be differentiated.

(a) The first stage is characterized by the attempt to hold on to an ideal concept of self. Active manipulation is the means whereby a realization of this idealized self-image is desired.

(b) The second stage brings the end of these attempts. The opposite of the desired state appears--despair. This leads to a letting go or surrender. "Nothingness" is experienced.

(c) The third stage brings a transformation. Growth occurs in the midst of surrender. This happens without conscious effort or activity. All it requires is to allow it to happen.

The paradoxical nature of salvation history, conversion, and human growth will be discussed. Finally, the analogy of these experiences will be illuminated by the perspective of the cross.

CHAPTER II

THE CROSS IS THE CENTRAL PAULINIC PERSPECTIVE--

THE PRESENTATIONAL LEVEL OF THE CROSS

THE CROSS IN THE CHRISTIAN PROCLAMATION
BEFORE PAULDid Jesus Interpret His Death
at the Cross?

Historic-critical exegesis came to the conclusion that Jesus did not interpret his death theologically.¹ All the gospel references to Jesus' announcing his death are themselves the results of theological reflection about Christ's death in the light of the Easter events. Early Christianity interprets this death, which is already history, through its own experiences with the risen Christ. This is done in the form of historically oriented gospel narration.

Whether Jesus went knowingly into his death is a psychological question which cannot be verified by historical research.² In my opinion, it is likely that "who behaves

¹Werner Schrage, "Das Verstaendnis des Todes Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament," in Fritz Viering (ed.) Das Kreuz Jesu Christi als Grund des Heils (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1967) p. 51. Hans Conzelmann, "Jesus Christus," in Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (Tübingen: Mohn, 1957-65), III, 646; Ernst Käsemann, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus," in his Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), I, 211.

²Rudolf Bultmann, Das Verhaeltnis der urchristlichen Christusbotschaft zum historischen Jesus (Heidelberg: Winter, 1960), p. 12. Schrage, pp. 52f.

in the way Jesus behaved has to be aware of confrontations, which must have occurred. He has to think about ultimate consequences."³ We will not know whether Jesus chose those last consequences willingly or not.

The cross as central theological perspective is not part of the message of the historical Jesus. It is a theological perspective because it is the expression of faith which responds to Jesus as a whole gestalt.

The Nature of Early Christian Traditions

Modern New Testament research established the dialogical character of its documents. They deal with "answers to concrete questions, with the refutation of certain well-defined errors, with warnings and consolations addressed to concrete individuals."⁴ Since we have only the theological claims of our scripture documents, we need to reconstruct the assumptions of their partners in dialogue. Acts 6, for instance, talks about differences in doctrine which we have to reconstruct hypothetically. Nevertheless, recent research has thrown a relatively clear light on the whole range of early Christian theologies. The most important findings

³Willi Marxsen, "Erwaegungen zum Problem des verkue-ndigten Kreuzes," in his Der Exeget als Theologe (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1968), p. 163. (My translation).

⁴Ernst Käsemann, "The Canon of the New Testament and the Unity of the Church," in his Essays on New Testament Themes (Naperville: Allenson, 1964), p. 99.

ascertain that even the earliest theological and christological concepts show various differing, occasionally disagreeing, profiles.⁵

Formal and functional criteria make it possible to isolate material of a confessional, hymnic, or kerygmatic character which reflect oldest Christian traditions within the Paulinic literature. Some such criteria are: the distinct vocabulary in use, the comparison of the text's focus with that of the context, and the liturgical, or binding character of a certain passage. The setting of these materials is baptismal instruction, liturgy, or theological controversy.

My purpose in briefly dealing with the pre-Paulinic traditions about Christ's death is to provide depth and movement to my picture of Paul's theology. The unique thrust of Paul's understanding of the cross can be clarified better against the background of the other contemporary concepts of the cross.

It is important and consistent with the historic-critical approach to note that even these earliest formulae do not represent a timeless, always identical, principle of faith. Neither do they reflect dogma in a legalistic sense.

⁵Klaus Wengst, Christologische Formeln und Lieder des Urchristentums (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1972), p. 203.

They are specific historical relations and structures.⁶ The character of even these early traditions can be described as "Geschichte." They do not describe events of the past in an objective, detached manner. They report these same events, insofar as they represent a possibility of human existence, which offers to man a new understanding of himself. As historical fact, the cross of Jesus is the provable tragic end of a unique, inspiring man. As "Geschichte," however, the cross is proclaimed as a saving event, which offers to man a new view of himself. It demands decision, for or against.⁷

Early Theologies Without the Cross

Certain early groups did not consider the cross of Christ of present theological relevance. It either played a secondary role in comparison with the resurrection or it was an historical event which was overcome by a theology of glory or realized eschatology. These circles proclaimed the resurrection of Christ as the beginning of the eschatological events. Christ has subdued the demons once and for all. The congregations are freed from their power. The end of time is at hand. The Christians have been placed into

⁶Klaus Wegenast, Das Verstaendnis der Tradition bei Paulus und den Deuteropaulinen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), p. 51.

⁷Ibid., pp. 19f; Rudolf Bultmann, "Die Bedeutung des geschichtlichen Jesus für die Theologie des Paulus," in his Glauben und Verstehen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954), I, 204f.

heaven. The death of Christ is quite irrelevant in this respect and can be labeled "anathema" (cursed),⁸ since the earthly Jesus distracts from the divine savior. The original versions of hymns like I. Tim. 3:16; Col. 1:15-20, and Phil. 2:6-11 are traces of this theology which concentrates its christological statements totally in the relevancy of the resurrection of Christ.

(1) I. Tim. 3:16, a small six line hymn, condenses the life of the savior figure so that five of these six lines deal with his divine glory. Obedience, suffering, and death are not mentioned. The three opposing parallels: flesh (σάρξ) - spirit (πνεῦμα); angels (ἄγγελοι) - people (ἔθνη); and universe (κόσμος) - glory (δόξα), show that the song has a dualistic background: "above" and "below." The saving event, which is of relevancy to the believer, is the inthronisation of the savior, whose cosmic victory is affirmed by the old schematic ceremonial of Egyptian inthronisations: elevation, presentation, and inthronisation.⁹

(2) Col. 1:15-20 reports the defeat of the "all" by

⁸1. Cor. 12:3 "cursed is Jesus" has to be understood from a background, where the Corinthians had proclaimed Christ as inthroned as cosmocrator. The earthly Jesus has no saving relevance. See Ernst Käsemann, "Die Heilsbedeutung des Todes Jesu bei Paulus," in his Paulinische Perspektiven (Tübingen: Mohn, 1969), p. 100.

⁹For a debate of the background of this hymn see Wengst, pp. 156ff; Schrage, p. 62.

a savior figure who was the mediator of creation. According to Käsemann the two explanations "of the church" (τῆς ἐκκλησίας - v. 18) and "through the blood of his cross" (διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ - v. 20) are later additions of the author of Ephesians.¹⁰ Participation in the archetypal body of the mediator guarantees participation in cosmic pacification and reconciliation. Before the correction by the author, the hymn hardly mentions incarnation at all. Death (v. 18) is only the background for the present fulfillment.

(3) Phil. 2:6-11 praises a preexistent being which participates in the life of the "lower" reality. It is, therefore, exalted and enthroned as Lord of all powers. The background of the hymn has been identified as influenced by Hellenistic-pagan gnosis (Käsemann), or Hellenistic-Judaistic protognosis (Georgi), an off-shot of Jewish wisdom speculation.¹¹ If one takes away the most important Paulinic addition: "even the death of the cross" (τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ σταυροῦ v. 9), one finds again the familiar schema of incarnation and enthronisation. The authors of the hymn saw themselves

¹⁰Ernst Käsemann, "A Primitive Christian Baptismal Liturgy," in his Essays, p. 151; Eduard Schweizer, Erniedrigung und Erhöhung bei Jesus und seinen Nachfolgern (Zürich: Zwingli, 1955), pp. 101-02.

¹¹Ernst Käsemann, "Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2:5-11," in his Exegetische Versuche, I, 80; Wengst, p. 154; Dieter Georgi, "Der vorpaulinische Hymnus, Phil. 2:6-11," in Erich Dinkler (ed.) Zeit und Geschichte (Tübingen: Mohr, 1964), pp. 268ff.

as the heirs of this cosmic event.

We have here a self-understanding which defines the existence of a person according to the world he belongs to. Salvation means to be moved from the world of nothingness into the freedom of divine reign.¹²

Most likely, these hymns originated in hellenistic circles, who understood Easter as the change of times. They participated in this divine victory through the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. According to Paul's evaluation, they fall prey to an "emptying" of the cross.¹³ Along with it, they emptied the earthly reality by not participating in the everyday life of their contemporaries. Ethically, they were either extremely strict or extremely liberal.

We know of one other group which ignored largely the event of Jesus' death at the cross. This is the old Jerusalem group which has a strict apocalyptic profile and is oriented toward the immediate return of the messiah. These people had no time to care about theology. They waited fervently and were busy preparing themselves. They had stayed behind after the group supporting Stephanus was forced to leave the city. They were of exclusively Jewish origin and opposed to any mission work since this was the promise of the returning messiah. We find traces of prophetic sayings of this group in M, the material which is only reported

¹²Kasemann, *ibid.*, p. 94. (My translation).

¹³I. Cor. 1:17.

by Matthew. This source apparently did not report a passion story.¹⁴ The group is of secondary importance since it affected the Paulinic congregations only indirectly.¹⁵

We can only speculate about the reasons for such a theological overemphasis of the resurrection of the cross in Hellenistic circles. The experiences, which were later interpreted by the traditional concept of "resurrection," might have been so powerful and overwhelming to people with a Hellenistic background that they entirely dominated the efforts and lives of these early theologians. On the other hand, death and cross of Christ were a crisis for the disciples as is evident in the fact of their fleeing to Galilee.¹⁶ The same crisis most likely affected early Christian theological reflection. A suffering and dying messiah was not expected in Judaism and was a scandal in the Hellenistic surroundings. Someone who had died the infamous, miserable death of the crucified slave had a hard time to legitimate his divine claim. But these are psychological speculations. A valid reason was most likely a theological one. These groups understood the Jesus events in terms of their traditional theologies. There was no space for a theological

¹⁴Opinion expressed by Georgi in a lecture (Heidelberg, 1965); see also Schrage, p. 63.

¹⁵See below for a description of the Galatian heretics, p. 69.

¹⁶Mk. 14:50 and parallels; Lk. 24:21.

implication of the cross in these groups. If one looks at the total situation, one realizes that "the resurrection statements dominate the prepaulinic kerygma without a doubt."¹⁷

The Death of Christ in Theology
Before Paul

Nevertheless, there were groups which interpreted Christ's death theologically. These groups realized more strongly than the others that Jesus' cross shattered certain traditional religious expectations and ideas.

We find a voice of these groups interpreting the death of Christ soteriologically in the oldest traditional material. This tradition has been summarized under the name "pro nobis" (for us) formula.¹⁸

This formula has different forms. One can roughly differentiate four basic types:

- (1) The death formula: "Christ died for us"; "Christ who died for all"; "who died for them and rose."¹⁹
- (2) The "giving away" formula: "(God) gave him

¹⁷Jürgen Roloff, "Kritische Überlegungen zur gegenwaertigen Diskussion um das Kreuz Jesu," in his Die Heilsbedeutung von Kreuz und Auferstehung Jesu Christi (Berlin: Luther, 1970), p. 73. (My translation).

¹⁸Ernst Käsemann, "Zum Verstaendnis von Roem. 3:24-26," in his Exegetische Versuche, I, 96-100; Schrage, pp. 77ff.; Schweizer, pp. 81-86; Wegenast, pp. 51-82; Wengst, pp. 55-104.

¹⁹Rom. 5:8; I. Thess. 5:10; II. Cor. 5:14-15.

away for us all"; "(Christ) who gave himself for me"; "who gave himself for us."²⁰

(3) The sin formula: "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, he was buried, he was resurrected on the third day according to the scriptures"; "(Jesus) was given away for our sins, and resurrected for our justification."²¹

(4) Other atonement formulae: "(We are) justified through the ransom in Christ Jesus, whom God gave away as atonement in his blood."²²

Most scholars agree on the fact that there might have been one original version of this formula, which is preserved in I. Cor. 15: "Christ died for our sins." The formula refers to the suffering of the "servant of the Lord" (Is. 53). The title "servant of the Lord" was used relatively early by Aramaic circles as appellation of Christ. It disappears soon.²³ In a claim of prophetic fulfillment, these formulae call Jesus the atoning servant of Is. 53. The background for this theology has to be seen in Judaistic-Christian circles. Jewish atonement theology reassured the individual and the congregation of the forgiveness of their

²⁰Rom. 8:32; Gal. 2:20; Tit. 2:14; Eph. 2:2-25.

²¹I. Cor. 15:3; Rom. 4:24-25.

²²Rom. 3:24-25.

²³Schweizer, pp. 84-85.

past sins. This was achieved by sacrifices, cultus, as well as the vicarious death of martyrs and "just" persons. These early Christian groups transferred those ideas onto Jesus, the sacrifice. Thus, they understood the death of Christ as forgiveness of past sins. At the same time, it is the renewal and new promise of the Mosaic covenant for the Jesus-congregation. A strong, near-eschatological hope was combined with this atonement theology. Similarly to the Qumran group, the believers understood themselves as the cleansed "holy rest." The setting of the formula might have been the early practice of the Lord's supper and the sacrificial terminology and ideas surrounding it.²⁴ One participant might have called to the congregation: "Christ died for you," and the people responded: "Christ died for our sins."

These brief reflections about the formula serve to clarify that these groups understood themselves as the just heirs of the promises which were once made to the Jewish people. Now they, the Jesus people, are the "true Israel," the "holy rest."

Other prepaulinic traditions--like the sacrificial material used by the author of the letter to the Hebrews, and early versions of the passion narratives--will not be

²⁴The story of the "feeding of the 5,000" (Mk. 6:30-44, and parallels) was in its original version such a meal allegory, where Jesus appears as the second Moses.

dealt with in this context. They do not exert visible influence on Paul's theology.

Findings

Both theologies, which I reported on, have in common that they stay fairly close to their pre-Christian origins. Both groupings reinterpret their traditions so that either the divine Christ or the earthly Jesus are the central part of it. Yet, neither one really breaks away from the inherited ideas as Paul later does.

Another element needs to be mentioned. It is amazing how split both theologies are. The former emphasizes the risen, glorified Christ and wants to forget theologically the earthly Jesus. Theirs is a present, fulfilled eschatology. They now bathe in the gifts of the spirit and are already transformed in their substance.

The latter emphasize the earthly, human Jesus from David's lineage. He is the promised eschatological prophet who cleansed his people from sin and prepared those believers for the apocalyptic events to come. They experience the present moment as dark and shaken by the birth-pains of a new world. They spend their days anxiously preparing and waiting for the messiah.

Both these theologies are unable to appreciate the here and now, as the moment which is filled by the creating God. The first groups emphasize "now," but are far removed

from the here. They have disassociated themselves from all orders of male, female, rich and poor. They either neglect relationships and their bodies, or abuse both, since relationships and earthly, physical appearance have become irrelevant. These are mere shadows, and illusions, unable to trap the soul, which returns to its original home, the spiritual world.

The second groups emphasize the "here" by strict observance of the law and ascetic practices. Yet, they are not really in the "now," since they anticipate with fixation the day when the messiah will return.

I connect this lack of appreciation of the "here" and "now" with the lack of a theological reflection of the implications of the cross of Christ.

THE MODIFICATION OF THE TRADITION BY PAUL

The Significance of the Cross

The word "cross" appears in Paul's letters seven times as does the word "crucify."²⁵ The reader of or listener to Paul's letters brought with him a prior

²⁵I assume, together with the representatives of the historic-critical school, that only Romans 1 and 2, Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians 1, Thessalonians, and Philemon are authentic Paulinic documents. See Günter Bornkamm, Paulus (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1969), pp. 245-246.

understanding of the word "cross."²⁶

Cross is a torture instrument for capital punishment. Usually it consists of a pole, which is sometimes pointed, and which serves as support for an horizontal beam. The criminal was fastened to the beam by ropes or nails. The physical and emotional sufferings of this slow death in front of the curious masses are hardly imaginable.

This kind of punishment originated with the Persians and was handed down to the Romans. It was considered a punishment for slaves. Later it became one of the most effective means for the upholding of order in the Roman provinces. Capital punishment through the cross was used especially against freedom-fighters, who had tried to liberate their country from the Roman yoke. Crucifixion was considered the most disgraceful, lowly punishment. Cicero calls it the most cruel, most terrible capital punishment.

The delinquent was usually whipped and ridiculed prior to crucifixion. Occasionally he was undressed and the clothes were given to the executioners.

Jewish law did not know crucifixion as capital punishment. Idolatrists and persons openly blasphemous were stoned to death and later hung from a stake. The latter was not a capital punishment, but an additional punishment after death. It symbolized the exclusion from the congregation and declared the executed person as cursed by God, according to Dt. 21:23: "Every person hanging from the stake is cursed by God." Later this verse was also applied to persons who were crucified (Gal. 3:13).

These facts can be assumed as common knowledge among those to whom Paul writes about the cross.

Paul uses the terms "cross" and "crucify" in I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, and Philippians. He does not use either one in his letter to the Romans. This fact suggests that Paul uses these terms pronouncedly in his controversies with various theological opponents, as the

²⁶Johannes Schneider, " σταυρός ," in Gerhard Kittel (ed.) Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933-78), VII, 572-575.

former letters are of polemic content. Käsemann expresses this so:

The word "theology of the cross" means more. It should not become devotionally simplified. . . . The word "theology of the cross" loses its original meaning with unpolemical use.²⁷

Paul's statements about the theological significance of Christ's death and dying, or of Christ's blood are related to his theological views about the cross. "Death" and "dying" appear seven and eleven times respectively. Both are used repeatedly in Romans in relation to Christ. "Blood," as relating to Christ's death, is used by Paul twice in Romans and four times while debating the Lord's supper in I Corinthians.

The words "death" and "dying" describe a "terror which is feared. . . . (Paul) does not understand Christ's death as an heroic act. . . . Rather, death always remains the horror which turns life into unauthentic life."²⁸

Nevertheless, "death" is a less offensive, a less specific way of talking about Christ's death, than "cross." "Blood" also lacks the latter's polemic connotation: rather it has a solemn, liturgical sound. For the matter of this dissertation, I will use these three terms interchangeably since they all share Paul's unique understanding of the

²⁷Käsemann, "Die Heilsbedeutung," p. 64. (My translation).

²⁸Rudolf Bultmann, "θάνατος," in Kittel, III, 14. (My translation).

death of Christ. In order to distinguish it from other concepts of Christ's death,²⁹ I will call this Paulinic concept "theology of the cross."

The statistical facts alone do not adequately illuminate the significance of Christ's death and cross within the context of Paul's theology. In I Cor. 1:23, Paul summarizes his whole message as one of "Christ as crucified." He states this even more strongly in I Cor. 2:2 when he writes that he wants to know nothing but the crucified Christ. Gal. 3:1 Paul reminds the Galatians how he described Christ to their eyes as crucified. The words used by Paul in connection with the cross "portray publicly" (προγράφειν - Gal. 3:1); "preach" (κηρύσσειν - I Cor. 1:23); and "message" (κηρύγμα - I Cor. 1:21; 2:4) connote

the acting of the herald, who proclaims final, binding events in an official manner. The basic element of Paul's preaching is official announcement, official report of God's final saving action in the event of Golgatha.³⁰

Paul himself points by the choice of his words to the centrality and importance of the message of the cross in his preaching. These solemn terms give the words of the cross great weight within his theology.

In the following sections I want to follow Paul's

²⁹See above, p. 42.

³⁰Günter Delling, "Der Tod Jesu in der Verkuendigung des Paulus," in his Apophoreta (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964), p. 93. (My translation).

theology and the place of the cross within it in a descriptive way. An overview of the whole of his work suggests that statements about God, Christ, salvation, the nature and destiny of persons, the sacraments and ethics are centrally linked through the cross.

In Rom. 5:8 Paul describes God as one who shows his love by Christ's dying for us. God was in Christ and thus reconciled the world with himself.³¹ God is for us, since he did not spare his son, but gave him to die for us all. There is nothing which God would not give to us now.³² The cross of Christ shows God as the ultimately loving one.

In his description of the death of Christ, Paul calls him the son.³³ He underlines his closeness to God and his great dignity. Christ is the "God for us." At the same time, Paul affirms in Christ's death on the cross his full humanness.³⁴ Jesus is obedient.³⁵ He shares the ultimate excommunication of the godless.³⁶ Nevertheless, the Christ present in his congregation is the resurrected Christ, whom God made a new creation.³⁷

Christ's death at the cross and the reaction to this message reveals the self-centeredness of human nature. It

³¹II Cor. 2:19-21.

³²Rom. 8:32.

³³Rom. 5:10; Gal. 2:19-20.

³⁴Phil. 2:6-8; Rom. 8:3.

³⁵Phil. 2:8; Rom. 5:19.

³⁶Gal. 3:13

³⁷II Cor. 5:15-19.

looks for religious wisdom and miracles, but it is blind to the real presence of God.³⁸ It shows man as rebel, enemy, and godless.³⁹

Since the death of Christ is "for us,"⁴⁰ it is the foundation of justification and reconciliation.⁴¹ Thus, it became the possibility of a new life, the end of the law, and the end of all immature religion.⁴²

The death of Christ is the constituting element of the sacraments. Participating in the latter is proclamation of the death of Christ and participation in it.⁴³

Participation in the death of Christ has ethical consequences. It is a call to discipleship. The followers are asked for a similar humility as Christ has shown.⁴⁴ They are, paradoxically, to be free from the world and at the same time deeply committed to it.⁴⁵ They are dead to their sinful life.⁴⁶

This brief, incomplete description of the context of Paul's statements about the death or cross of Christ, is enough to show clearly that no part of his theology is

³⁸I Cor. 1:18ff. ³⁹Rom. 5:6,8,10; II Cor. 5:21.

⁴⁰I Thess. 5:10; I Cor. 8:11; Gal. 3:13; Rom. 5:6-8.

⁴¹II Cor. 5:18-20; Rom. 5:10-11.

⁴²Gal. 2:19-21; Gal. 4:3-7; II Cor. 3:13ff; Rom. 10:4.

⁴³I Cor. 11:23-26; Rom. 6:3. ⁴⁴Phil. 2:5ff.

⁴⁵Gal. 6:14. ⁴⁶Rom. 6:11-12.

unrelated to this very central issue. It is indeed, for Paul's theology, of the greatest significance.

Paul's Use of His Tradition

Wegenast showed in a very carefully and well researched study that

No tradition can be the norm for his (Paul's) preaching, but solely his revealed gospel, the Christ as son and Lord, the norm of all traditions. . . . Paul is no servant of tradition, but a servant of the kyrios, who met him in a revelation.⁴⁷

Paul modifies his tradition freely through inserts, change of words, additions, and context. He does this to emphasize a certain thrust of the tradition and to correct it.

I pointed out above how the traditions before Paul stayed within their particular traditional thought. Only against this background can one fully understand the great significance of Paul's innovative interpretation of the cross. He is the first theologian to place the cross of Christ consequently into the center of his theology. With this, he transcended Judaistic and Hellenistic traditions. The depth and lostness of the cross, which is foolishness and scandal alike in the eyes of a world, which is caught in its own self-deception, is exactly the place where God can speak his new and unique word. This word of the cross alone is able to be at once both freeing and involving.

⁴⁷Wegenast, pp. 164-65. (My translation).

In the following paragraphs I will demonstrate, through exegetical spot-checks, how Paul uses his tradition and the cross in this process as a criterion which breaks through preconceived theological assumptions. The discussion will enter Paulinic theology at a deeper level. I will use extensively the findings of historic-critical research. This is necessary in the context of this thesis, since I am thus able to highlight Paul's theological modus of operating. As I will show, I consider this his perspectival center, the cross as extremely helpful in construing a perspectival center, around which its data can be gathered, for pastoral theology.

The way Paul constructs theology is supportive of the general assumption of this dissertation: that a valid theology needs a perspectival center which forms the core of all theological statements and their connecting link. He does not choose the approach which seems so popular today, which gathers theological concepts from various sources linking them together like pearls on a string. This string, which holds the whole chain together, is usually one's own contemporary assumption. In a second step, theological statements which support this view are then gathered in an uncritical, harmonizing fashion, and regardless of their context.

Paul uses his revelation of the "kyrios" as a starting point. This revelation has a very distinct character,

and all theologizing has to be measured again and again on its center. In this perspective, theology is always a critical process.

This has to remain an assumption until I can clarify it through an unfolding of Paul's style of theological operation. In the course of my overall argument, I will show that a theology which uses the cross as a central perspective is capable of involving itself in sciences without losing its own distinct character.

In the next paragraph I will show Paul's struggle with groups who represent a realized eschatology. The following paragraph will illuminate Paul's struggle with exclusively futuric, Judaistic theologies. I will, thereby, point out the paradoxical character of Paul's theology and its rootedness in the cross.

Paul and Realized Eschatologies

(1) Philippians 2:5-11. I have already touched this hymn briefly and stated its prepaulinic character. Now, I want to focus more closely on the redaction of the tradition by Paul. Once more, an outline of the intention of the hymnological tradition is necessary. I agree with Dieter Georgi, who reexamined the religious background of the hymn and claimed that it did not originate in pagan-Hellenistic Christian circles of protognostic origin.⁴⁸

⁴⁸Georgi, pp. 268ff.

Georgi brings convincing parallels about the role of a personified "wisdom" in Hellenistic Judaism, which show a theological relationship to the background of our hymn.

The tradition is modified by Paul through the context and through the insert "even the death of the cross" (v. 9). It originally talks about a savior-figure who was in the sphere of God. "Figure" ($\mu\omicron\rho\psi\eta$) connotes, in Hellenistic Greek "being" or "essence" with a distinctive thrust, power, or force. This "being" participated in the power of divine essence (v. 6). Our text leads us into the world of Hellenistic mythology where we find statements about a "man-savior" or, personified "wisdom"-figure. This "being" is qualitatively different from all earthly people and of divine nature.

The archetypal person lowers himself into the world of "slaves" and takes on the body of such a slave, becoming human (v. 7). This act has nothing to do with ethical concern, or morality, as the idealistic exegesis of 19th century assumed. It has to be seen solely against the background of Hellenistic-dualistic thought. The latter thought-sphere conceives of human nature as imprisoned under the rule of cosmic powers, the "word - elements," which are destructive and hostile. The world, which was once divine, degenerated under the rule of these devilish powers into the death-ridden, disastrous, negative world, which characterized the contemporary experience.

By these powers, who hold fate in their claws, the Hellenistic world was shaken in choking anxiety, which caused them to follow the rules and laws of these powers and to become subservient to them.⁴⁹

The prepaulinic hymn breaks through the pre-Christian model by stressing the full humanity of the savior. This is unthinkable, both in "wisdom" speculation as well as gnostic thought. There the "wisdom"-savior dwells within a human body, but leaves the body before death and reincarnates himself in another body, or, he returns to heaven undefeated. He ridicules the demons who thought that they had overwhelmed him. Thus, he demonstrates their limits.

The view of our hymn is different. The savior is obedient unto death. In fact, this unheard of event--and the hymn talks about a dramatic event, not just a speculation--links history and the eternal. The full incarnation of the Christ demonstrates not merely the limits of the "powers," but their defeat and ultimate non-existence.

This universal event breaks through the slavery. It liberates the frightened world from the rule of the destructive cosmic powers. The participation of Jesus in slavery under the demons brings about change. The powers are rendered powerless and freedom reigns. Even the demons themselves are added to the cosmic circle that hails: Lord is the Christ Jesus. He is Lord himself now. The Septuagint appellation of God is transferred onto Jesus.

⁴⁹Wegenast, p. 88. (My translation).

In Christ, his lowering himself, his obedience and his death, his elevation and inthronisation, the power appeared which dethroned the powers. According to this hymn, the congregation claims this saving event for itself, claims the sphere of the power of Christ, who turns the powers into defeated elements, whose influence is just the final twitching of the slain.⁵⁰

Without the context, the hymn described a saving event of eschatological dimension. The congregation recited, reenacted, and reaffirmed the victory, which was already won. Thoughts of imitation were not connected with the hymn, since Christ is a preexistent divine being. He cannot be example. He is archetype, not image.

Paul introduces the hymn with the words: "Each one among you strive for that which is also valid within the sphere of Christ." He shares with his tradition the assumption that Christ brought about a change of powers and that one can be part of his sphere, thus participating in the saving event. However, he connects the indicative of the hymn with an imperative of ethical admonition. The new freedom requires responsibility.

Paul injects also: "even to the death of the cross." With this addition, he modifies the tradition considerably. This will become more clear when I show the context of the whole letter.

Today it is generally assumed that Philippians is a collection of two different Paulinic letters. The major

⁵⁰Ibid.

part of the first is; chapters 1-2:30. The second letter consists largely of chapter 3:1-4:1. Chapter 4:2-23 is divided up differently by different authors.⁵¹ This is of little importance for the course of my argument.

The difference between the two fragments is mainly one in the degree of polemics used. The first letter is rather friendly, the second full of sharp, hostile attacks. It shows the apostle in a full-blown struggle with a theology he disagrees with completely. Schmithals assumes that both letters talk to the same congregation and signify different steps in the same struggle. Verses 1:27,27; 2:2ff; 2:12; and 2:16 show that Paul has reasons for admonitions. In this first letter he appears troubled. The second letter reflects his strong fight.

Helmut Koester has given us a good profile of the theological assumptions of Paul's opponents in Philippi:

(1) They are Jewish apostles, who boast with their special spiritual qualities. (2) They strive for a complete fulfillment of the law, including circumcision as the unique sign of such fulfillment. (3) The group assumes that resurrection is already achieved. (4) The fulfillment of the law brings "gnosis" and mediates the presence of the eschatological gifts that were promised. The once futuristic

⁵¹Walter Schmithals, "Die Irrlehrer des Philipperbriefes," in his Paulus und die Gnostiker (Hamburg: Reich, 1965), pp. 45-87, esp. 51-55; Helmut Koester, "The Purpose of a Paulinic Fragment," New Testament Studies, VIII (1962), 317-32, esp. 317.

apocalyptic expectations are the spiritual possessions of the individual in the present moment. This renders the Christian existence unhistorical beyond all sufferings and the reality of death.

Paul argues desperately against this legalistic distortion and moralistic perfection. He does this by using some very sharp insults. He calls the opponents "dogs" and "advocates of castration." He emphasizes that he could boast with perfection, too, but that he considers this "dung." He strives for the justification, which comes from God alone, and he has fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, in order to be similar to his death. He emphasizes that he is still striving for this similarity, and that he expects perfection and resurrection only from the future. He calls those who think that they have already reached the end, resurrection, and perfection, "enemies of the cross."

It is quite obvious that the hymn was indeed used by the opponents in order to justify their own theology. Most likely the hymn was common tradition in Paul's churches and shared as valid tradition by Paul himself. I see the strongest reason supporting the use of the hymn by Paul's opponents in the fact that the most important thoughts of the Paulinic modification of the hymn also appear in the polemic part, chapter 3. The term "Let us strive . . ." ($\phi\rho\omicron\nu\epsilon\iota\upsilon$) is used in 2:5 and 3:16. What it means to have the mind of the "sphere of Christ" ($\epsilon\nu$ $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omega$ -2:5) is specified in 3:9--"I

want to be found in his sphere" (ἐν αὐτῷ). This shows itself in "knowing him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship with his sufferings, by being conformed to his death" (3:20).

The fact that Paul can quote the same hymn which his opponents use shows that they both agree on the validity of the song. They disagree completely, however, on the anthropological and ethical consequences. These are specified in the context and the insert mentioned above.

The overall hymn, including the indicative elements, has an ethical accent according to the intention of the redactor.⁵²

Even though the hymn did originally assume that the archetype could never become the image, Paul modifies the intention through his context so that Christ is now both: archetype and image. Paul talks, therefore, unlike his opponents about fellowship with the sufferings of Christ and participation in his death.

The second element is closely related to the first. The original hymn and the opponents do not care how Christ died. His death is important merely as part of his completed incarnation which is the beginning of the saving event. His obedience which points to the idea of the

⁵²Georg Strecker, "Redaktion und Tradition im Christushymnus Phil. 2:6-11," Zeitschrift fuer Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, LV (1964), 63-78, esp. 68.

suffering "just"⁵³ is important. The opponents saw in Jesus the "just" who fulfilled the law completely, but who suffered death by the powers unjustly. Thus, they follow late-Jewish Hellenistic speculation. In sharp polemics Paul emphasizes: not merely death, but death at the cross. I talked about the offensive, infamous character of the cross above. According to Paul, Jesus dethroned not only the powers by his death, but tore apart the law as well. He himself had become lawless and cursed (Gal. 3:13). Jesus' participation in the lower world was radical to the point that any dualities are overcome and integrated.

The unity of the world is proclaimed under inclusion of the godless world. . . . This means that the Christian congregation confesses in the midst of the experience of its limited and human fate to the dominion of him, who turned world into world and human beings into human beings. Differently stated, Jesus let the world come to word by fully giving himself into its fate. Now the world has to be forever a witness that the humanizing of man and the secularizing of the world really happened.⁵⁴

The opponents did not really overcome the dualism which was given with their mythological traditions. Their insistence on the law and realized eschatology set them apart from the world and, therefore, from God, according to Paul. Paul reopens the horizon of apocalyptic distance and reclaims the unity of reality for his congregation.

⁵³Sap. 2:10-5:23; for the whole complex of the incarnation of "wisdom" in the "just" see Georgi, p. 271.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 290-91. (My translation).

(2) I Cor. 15:1-11. In connection with Phil. 2, two passages from I Cor. become significant: the confessional tradition in chapter 15 and the communion tradition in chapter 11. Both are used by Paul in order to correct theological assumptions of opponents.

Joachim Schniewind, Walter Schmithals, and Ulrich Wilckens have contributed to a more detailed knowledge of the Corinthian theology. Based on their search, we have the following profile of the Corinthian opponents of Paul:⁵⁵

- (a) They are Christians of gnostic background.
- (b) They confess "Christ is Lord" and say under pneumatic influence: "Cursed is Jesus" (I Cor. 12:3). They divide sharply between the man Jesus and the divine spiritual being: Christ.
- (c) The believers call themselves "pneumatics" and "wise"; they see themselves as identical with their savior, whom they worship as the incarnated "wisdom"-figure, who is now "Lord of glory."
- (d) The pneumatics do not believe in a futuristic physical resurrection from the dead, since this is unnecessary (I Cor. 15-12). With Christ, they are already transposed in spirit into the kingdom of glory. The physical world is

⁵⁵Joachim Schniewind, "Die Leugner der Auferstehung in Korinth," in Ernst Kaehler (ed.) Nachgelassene Reden und Aufsätze (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1952), pp. 110-39; Walter Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth (Nashville: Abington Press, 1971); Ulrich Wilckens, Weisheit und Torheit (Tübingen: Mohr, 1959).

irrelevant in a soteriological sense.

(e) The believers participate in Christ's kingdom through the sacraments which they call "spiritual food and drink" (I Cor. 10:3-4; 12:13). The sacraments are "medicine for immortality." (φάρμακον ἀθανασίας)

(f) Since the "material" sphere is depraved and irrelevant, the souls of the believers are removed from it. The Corinthians were, therefore, liberals demonstrating their spiritual strength by eating the pagan sacrificial meat, visiting the cultic prostitutes, holding enthusiastic meals, etc.

Despite great differences regarding the law and the claim of the O.T. traditions, the heretics of I Cor. are related to those of Philippians. They both proclaim a realized eschatology which removes them from the slavery of the material reality by setting them free into the freedom of those who are "gifted."

Again, Paul strongly emphasizes the cross as sole content of the Christian gospel.⁵⁶ The saving event is not the removal into heavens together with the savior, but crucifixion with him and obedience to the word about this crucified Christ. Against the pneumatically inspired utterances of his opponents, Paul claims that the risen Lord is identical with the earthly, crucified Jesus.

⁵⁶I Cor. 1:17-23; 2:2ff.

The traditional confession, which Paul quotes in chapter 15, serves to underline this point. It consists of the verses 3-5 which are symmetrically structured:

That Christ died for our sins according to the
scriptures,
That he was buried,
That he was resurrected on the third day according
to the scriptures
And that he appeared to Kephas, then the twelve.

In the introduction (v. 1-2), Paul reminds the Corinthians that they accepted this creed which he brought to them. The original intention of these verses was in atonement theology.⁵⁷ It emphasizes the humanity of Christ and his atoning death. The resurrection is God's "yes" to this death. With this tradition, Paul corrects and attacks the opinion of his opponents.

By introducing the tradition, inserting sentences, and the context (15:6-53), Paul draws conclusions completely opposite to those of the Corinthians. They considered the body a prison which had been overcome by the immortal self. They experienced pneumatic connection with the risen Lord. Paul, however, limits the number of those who had direct connection with Christ and excludes the opponents. They are to participate in his atoning death and to wait for the resurrection from the dead.

Similarly to his argumentation in Philippians, Paul reopens the future dimension of the completion of salvation.

⁵⁷See above pp. 42-45.

Therefore, the believers are full participants in the world, its affairs, its orders, and its ethical responsibilities. They are still in their natural bodies (v. 46) and still children of this world, even though they carry with them the promise and certainty of the spiritual body. They are not beyond history and reality, but still involved in it and still on the way.

(3) I Cor. 11:23ff. The opponents are the same. In this passage Paul corrects their sacramental theology. Again, he quotes oldest tradition.⁵⁸ Again, he understands it differently than the other theologians. The original formula spanned the verses 23c-25. The verses 26ff. are Paulinic interpretation.

The context shows that the Corinthians knew how to celebrate. However, the "one stays hungry and the other is drunk." To them, the sacramental part was most important and the rest was irrelevant.⁵⁹ The meal transfers away from all earthly structures and relationships into the individual fulfillment of salvation through incorporation into the "Lord." Chapters 12-13 reflect this enthusiastic assumption of the opponents:

⁵⁸Wegenast, pp. 94-102. There is also a good comparison of the Mark and Paul versions of the communion traditions.

⁵⁹Günter Bornkamm, "Herrenmahl und Kirche bei Paulus," in his Studien zu Antike und Urchristentum (München: Kaiser, 1963), p. 144.

We are all baptized into one body, whether Jews, or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we all drank the same "spirit."

Now Paul adds, continues, and modifies:

But the body is not one member, but many.

Against those who see in the sacrament the gift of transcendence, Paul emphasizes, through his context, that participation in the sacraments is proclamation of the death of the "Lord" "until he comes" (v. 26). This implies that communion does not transcend the congregation to a place beyond time, but that it is participation in the reality of the structures of the world. The sacraments are not a natural change-process, as in Hellenistic gnosticism, but "word-events." They are the place where the power of the risen Lord confronts the world by incorporating it into his saving obedient death.

Paul and Futuric Eschatologies

(1) Rom. 3:24ff. I have demonstrated how Paul modifies and corrects theologies of a realized eschatological character. Occasionally he quotes, thereby, "for us" formulas in order to reclaim the eschatological distance. Paul, however, was no more a full advocate of this theology than the former. A look at Rom. 3:24ff. will clarify this statement.

Bultmann has shown that we have here prepaulinic

tradition.⁶⁰ It reads:

Justified through the ransom of Christ Jesus,
(freely through his grace),
whom God sent forth as atonement in his blood,
(by faith),
as proof of his justice,
because he passed over the former sins
in his patience.

The inserts in parentheses are Paulinic additions.

The tradition leads us into late-Jewish thought, where justice, forgiveness, and patience of God are emphasized.⁶¹ Ezra 8:36 reads: "Your goodness and justice, O, Lord, is revealed in your mercy over those who have no treasure of good works." The perspective is Jewish covenant theology. God holds onto the covenant even if his people break it and fall into sin. Therefore, he shows that he is patient, kind, and just. Our text actualizes these thoughts in the following way: what the Jewish congregation hopes and prays for, truly happened in the death of Jesus. The old breaches of the covenant are mended and God makes restitution of the covenant once more.

One has to be aware that these verses see the continuity of the old people of God as valid, that the history of Israel is affirmed as one's own history, and that the new covenant is the restitution of the old one.⁶²

What is now the meaning of the Paulinic modifications?

⁶⁰Rudolf Bultmann, Theologie des Neuen Testaments (Tübingen: Mohr, 1964), pp. 49-50.

⁶¹See Käsemann, "Zum Verstaendnis," pp. 96-100.

⁶²Ibid., p. 99. (My translation).

Verse 26a is a Paulinic parallel to 25b. Thus, Paul affirms that the saving death finished the time of disobedience and is proof of God's justice. However, the difference lies in the nature of the divine justice. While the formula affirms the continuity between new and old covenant, Paul leaves the context of the covenant theology. Rom. 1:17-18 and the context of chapter 3 show that the partner of God is the world, not merely Israel.

Justice of God is, for Paul, not faithfulness to the covenant with his chosen people, but "justification of the godless," of pagans and Jews alike. The time is completely new in comparison with the old covenant.⁶³

The belonging to a people is not the condition for justification, but faith. This is emphasized by Paul's insert in v. 25. With the words "at this time" (τῷ νῦν καιρῷ), Paul creates a barrier between the past and the present. It is not the history of Israel, but the world of Adam which fell and is under the wrath of God. It is the opposite of the present "good time." Verse 26 has a strong individualistic orientation.

Paul corrects his Judaistic document by opposing the continuity between the old and the new covenant. He no longer thinks in terms of "new covenant," but in terms of "new creation." His Hellenistic heritage breaks through here. It becomes clear, also, why Paul's churches were so easily invaded by the different gnostic groups. Paul does

⁶³Wegenast, p. 78. (My translation).

indeed understand salvation as a "change of powers." Justification is a cosmic event.

(2) Gal. 1:4-5; Gal. 2:19-21. Paul also emphasizes this point in his encounter with the Judaistic heretics of Galatia.

Heinrich Schlier⁶⁴ suggested that Paul's opponents in Galatia were of apocalyptic background like the Qumran congregation. Bornkamm assumes Judaistic gnostic origin.⁶⁵ The exact religious-historical background is hard to determine, since Judeo-Christian propaganda was varied and difficult to define.⁶⁶ Certain basic teachings are unquestionable.

(a) The opponents are Christian missionaries who actively attack Paul and his gospel. They must have some connection to the "convent of apostles," since Paul refers to this event in Gal. 2. This fact makes gnostic origin of the group less likely and suggests apocalyptic background.

(b) They require circumcision as a condition of salvation. This act symbolizes that the Galatians place themselves into the history of Israel and accept the

⁶⁴Heinrich Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), pp. 19-24.

⁶⁵Günter Bornkamm, "Die Haeresie des Kolosserbriefes," in his Das Ende des Gesetzes (München: Kaiser, 1952), pp. 140-147.

⁶⁶Dieter Georgi, Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief (Neukirchen: Neukirchen Verlag, 1964), pp. 205-213.

Israelitic covenant as their own.

(c) "Elements of the kosmos" (στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου) and their observation play an important role. Most likely, the background of Colossians is a further development of the Galatian heresy. There, the "elements" bring about divinisation. This is not yet the case in Galatians. Here, they merely play a role in the cosmological drama which is unfolding.⁶⁷

In Gal. 1:4, Paul quotes the tradition of the opponents, an old "for us" formula. As I have shown, it had its setting in a Christian covenant theology. The formula, chapter 2, and the basic thrust of the Galatian theology, point toward a Judaistic theology.

How does Paul modify the tradition? He agrees with his opponents on the fact that Christ died for our sins and salvation. He disagrees, however, about the anthropological and ethical consequences of this event. In 1:4, he does not understand the death of Christ as restitution of the covenant, but as a saving action from "this evil present time" (τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ). The Galatian theologians wait for their being torn out of this "evil time." Paul looks back at this event as one which is already completed. Therefore, the Galatians are required to observe circumcision and the stars. Paul is already free of such

⁶⁷Schlier, p. 23.

obligations and a participant in the eschatological freedom of Christ (Gal. 5).

In 2:19, Paul reinterprets the Galatian attitude toward the law more distinctly. Christ tore apart the law at his cross. This is the cursed cross which can never become a saving event according to strict observation of the law. Therefore, the Christian is dead to the law, just as Christ died. He is crucified with Christ and lives with him in spirit. The saving event of the death of Christ breaks through all limits and preconditions which we expect when we approach God. It is a completely new, free action of God.

THE PRESENTATIONAL CONTENT OF THE CROSS

Historic-critical exegesis made it possible to listen with more awareness to the dialogue which Paul led with his contemporaries. With this, the theological task of exploring the presentational level of the cross is not yet finished. A concise summary of the content of the cross in contemporary language will complete this task. Three aspects of the cross will be of interest: (1) the implications of the cross for the paradoxical character of Christian theology; (2) the implications of the cross for a Christian anthropology; and (3) the implication of the cross in the light of its symbolic character.

The Paradox Character of Christian Theology

The exegetical spot-checks showed that Paul's statements about the cross of Christ are of a paradoxical nature. They illuminate the character of Christian theology as such.

(a) Paul asserts the presence of salvation against Judaistic opponents who see the significance of Jesus mainly in his atoning death for a renewal of the covenant. Here, Paul emphasizes an aspect of the cross that shows it as the beginning of new creation. It is a freeing power which ends the "law" as condition for salvation. It breaks apart all barriers which separate the believers from the world. The cross is seen in this aspect as a cosmic event. It ends the alienation of the old creation and radically changes the power structure in the universe. Sin is overcome, and nothing is left unclean, unblessed, or unreconciled. The Christian participates in this freedom and is a new creation. She/he has transcended the earthly limitations with Christ through the grace of God. Being male or female, free or slave, old or young, Jew or pagan are no longer of any concern.

(b) Paul, however, points to another aspect of the cross as soon as he talks to his Hellenistic opponents. These emphasize the present salvation, the end of history, and the change of the believers' nature from the earthly to the divine. Paul now points to the cross as the sign of involvement with the earth. It is not only the sign of

victory, but also the sign of faithfulness to the earth: of participation, of sharing the painful structures and orders of this world. It is the sign of obedience to God, of surrender of one's own dreams.

(c) For Paul, the cross is the unifying center which brings together both aspects which seem so contradictory to reason. It places persons into a place where they are free and servants, secure and insecure, just and sinners, fulfilled and on the way, sacred and secular, belonging wholly to this world and wholly transcending it. This tension in Paul's theology makes it so exciting, so rich, and so challenging. It is extremely difficult to stand this tension. The historical situation requires an emphasis of one or the other aspect of the whole. One likes its transcending elements, another the this-worldly ethical implication, and a third the dynamic power of the revolutionary elements. One sees mainly the reconciling aspects, another the changing, alienating side. One considers Christianity the most advanced religion, another affirms that it is no religion at all. Church history is full of these conflicts. Out of the distance we are able to see that usually both sides involved had part of the truth and that neither one has the whole truth. While we are actually involved in such conflicts, it is harder to be objective about it.

The cross--according to Paul--is the dynamic center which unites and reconciles these different aspects. It is

in this sense, truly paradoxical and comparable to an Eastern "koan." The latter is a riddle which has the function to confuse people so that in their logical, rational thinking they "wake up" to reality. The cross affirms that reality cannot be comprehended by reason alone and, that this is necessarily so if it is God's reality. God's power is one which works miracles. At the same time, it is as simple as the baby in the manger of Bethlehem.

The cross does not merely unite and harmonize reality. It throws a very unique and contrasting shadow over it. This becomes clear when we look at the function which the cross has in Paul's letters. It sharpens the view for the demonic aspects hidden within the human soul. It mercilessly uncovers the human tendency to separate the truth so that it is no longer whole, but partial. A separation of truth renders it partial to human interests. The cross uncovers the human tendency to abuse God. God becomes a guarantee for one's own salvation. In this respect, we want to own, possess, and be God. Legalistic or enthusiastic theologies have in common the desire to stay within their "covers," to hold onto their traditions. They end up being those who are privileged. The ideological and theological background varies considerably. Some are ascetics, others libertinists, and others mystics. The tendency to separate, to hold on, to turn the truth into something partial, is common to all of them.

The Anthropological Implication of the Cross

The findings of this inquiry into Paul's theology of the cross further help to throw a light on Paul's anthropology. In the course of this argument, I limit the reflection of Paul's statements about persons to the way the Christian experiences God, the world, and him/herself in the light of the cross. This experience is marked by a conversion. By this, I mean a turning away from one way of experiencing to a new, different way of experiencing.

(a) Paul accuses his opponents of not having turned away from a pre-Christian way of experiencing God, world, and themselves. Both, futuric and enthusiastic theologians are caught in the same dilemma in his perception. They understand salvation as a removal or separation from the rest of the ongoing reality. In this sense, the opponents claim "conversion" for themselves. They understand it as a separation. Paradoxically, Paul argues that this turning away from reality, which is an attempt of securing salvation for oneself, has always been the sign of the sinful, fallen world. It is a refined way of escaping in the name of God the here and now claim of this God.

The result of this separation is an apathetic existence.⁶⁸ The antique world claimed "apathy" as metaphysical state and ethical ideal. It implies:

⁶⁸cf. Jürgen Moltmann, Der gekreuzigte Gott (München: Kaiser, 1972), pp. 255-58.

. . . an unavailability for outer influences, insensitivity as ascribed to dead objects, and freedom of the spirit from inner needs and outer limits.⁶⁹

The believer strives for "apathy" by walling him/herself from reality. One can do this in two ways. (1) One can withdraw from the body, emotions, desires, pain, and dependencies. (2) One can adhere to the rigid observation of "laws" and attempt, thus, to control every aspect of life. Either way he/she tries to separate him/herself from finiteness so that he/she cannot be reached or touched by it. Enthusiasm--even though passionate on the surface--and legalism reveal themselves in this view as the two sides of the same coin.

"Apathy" is for the "religious" person a sign of strength. It is a guarantee of salvation and ultimate freedom.

A review of the apatheia discussion in antique Hellenism, Judaism, and Christianity shows that apatheia is not the petrification of man and not those symptoms of disease, which we call today apathy, stupefaction, and indifference. It connotes the freedom of man and his superiority to the world according to the perfect, desireless freedom of God. Apathy is the entry into the higher, divine sphere of the Logos.⁷⁰

According to Paul, such superiority is the sign of the unreconciled, sinful human nature. It is the attitude of Adam, who attempts to become divine and "know" God's secrets. Paradoxically, such a person loses his connection with the

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 256. (My translation).

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 258. (My translation).

will of God. One avoids the wholeness and fullness of life. One becomes partial to one's own idealized self, and religion is idolatry. One continuously ends up with one's own self and not with the living God.

(b) Encounter with the cross of Christ leads persons to a turnaround. They have encountered a sympathetic God, who has not stayed in the remote distance of the untouchable, perfect being. God has stepped out of his distance and become sympathetic to humanity. The ultimate demonstration of the sympathy is the cross. God stepped forth and brought renewal of sympathy and poured life into that which he created.

This God has touched the life of the believer through the cross of Christ. God works a conversion to life within the person. Thus, the person is freed to become sympathetic. He/she is deeply involved in his/her own existence and encounters God within the pains and passions of life as well as within its greatness and beauty. Such a life gives up safeguarding and surrenders to that which is. It is the starting point of community and love among people.

Life in communion with Christ is full life in the trinitarian situation of God. The believer has died in Christ and is resurrected to new life, as Paul states in Rom. 6:8. He participates realistically in God's suffering in the world, because he participates in God's passion of love. On the other hand, he participates in the concrete sufferings of the world because God has accepted those as his sufferings in the cross of his son.⁷¹

⁷¹Ibid., p. 266. (My translation).

Such surrender to life in its fullest and to the suffering of God within it is born out of the strength and the freedom of God. It reveals the search for perfection of the unconverted person as a sign of fear and insecurity. The cross throws a paradoxical light on the experience of the believer. Outward strength and distance is discovered as inner despair; outer weakness and vulnerability point to the courage and strength of faith.

The Symbolic Background of the Cross

A contemporary interpretation of the cross as central theological perspective in Paul needs to be informed by mythological and symbolical uses of the cross in pre-Christian traditions. Even though it is impossible to draw a direct line from those materials to Paul, both can be seen as manifestations of the unconscious aspects of the human mind. Therefore, the study of the mythological and intuitive pre-Christian uses of the cross may provide an amplifying and illuminating background to Paul's statements about the cross.

This inquiry moves beyond historic-critical analysis, which understands texts out of their original life-setting. By introducing the term "unconscious" I add to the historic element of exegesis a psychological element. This aspect assumes that a biblical writer does not only respond to a historical situation, but also to a psychological one. The

historical place links Paul's statements to an actual dialogue with concrete people about existential concerns. The psychological situation of Paul which allows him to participate unconsciously in a depth dimension of the human mind links Paul's statements to the intuitive and mythological heritage of all people. Steffen affirmed an exegesis which takes into account historical and mythological aspects.⁷²

The historical and the mythical statements grasp each a different dimension of "Geschichte." (Both Greek words for history and myth have a common meaning and describe something like: told, reported, explored history.) They do not mutually exclude each other, but complement each other.⁷³

The mythological and symbolic use of the cross is presented as the expression of the unconscious mind which may have influenced Paul's thinking about the cross, even though we cannot verify any historical knowledge of these myths by Paul. I share the assumptions of Jungian psychology that archetypal images are at work in the depth of the human mind. These archetypal images are perceived consciously in the form of symbols and myths. Neumann has explored the archetype of the great mother and describes this phenomenon in these words:

In other words, the "archetype an sich" is a nuclear phenomenon transcending consciousness, and its "eternal presence" is nonvisible. But not only does it act as a magnetic field, directing the unconscious behavior of

⁷²Uwe Steffen, *Das Mysterium von Tod und Auferstehung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), pp. 22-29.

⁷³Ibid., p. 25. (My translation).

the personality through the pattern of behavior set up by the instincts; it also operates as a pattern of vision in the consciousness, ordering the psychic material into symbolic images.⁷⁴

Only this archetypal productivity of the human mind explains the fact that the cross played an important part in the symbols and myths of so many early and unrelated cultures. The fact that Paul's thinking was in some unconscious way influenced by this archetypal image cannot be excluded.

In the following paragraphs I will mention three different aspects of unhistorical uses of the cross: (a) ancient symbolic uses; (b) mythological uses; (c) the cross mark in early Christian use.

(a) The religious and symbolical use of the cross is ancient and reaches as far back into history as is known to us. It appears as a geometrical form on high neolithic pottery (4500-3500 B.C.) of the so-called Halaf and Samarra styles.

We find the Maltese cross, too, in the centers of these earliest known geometrical designs - occasionally modified in such a way as to suggest stylized animal forms emerging from the arms; and in several examples the figures of women appear, with their feet and heads coming together in the middle of the circular design, to form a star. Again, the forms of four gazelles may circumambulate a tree.⁷⁵

Later we find the sign on stone-age clay drums dating from

⁷⁴ Erich Neumann, The Great Mother (New York: Pantheon, 1955), p. 6.

⁷⁵ Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology (New York: Viking Press, 1954), pp. 141f.

ca. 2000 B.C. It was known in Assyria, where it was the symbol of the sun, and in Egypt, where it represented life and immortality. It was known all over the world and thus it is one of the best known collective symbols.

The earliest symbols to emerge are the simplest, which we usually designate as "abstract," e.g., the circle and the cross. They are closest to the nonvisual character of the "archetype an sich," and are to be understood as the pre-concrete and prepictorial form of the beginning, whose simplicity is elementary and not abstract.⁷⁶

Illustration 1 shows a variety of variations of the motif. The oldest forms are (1) the equilateral cross; (5) the sun-wheel; (11) the Egyptian cross; (13-15) various forms of swastikas.

What is the meaning of the symbol? It seems that by the very nature of a symbol which contains conscious and unconscious elements a simple description of content is impossible. The meanings seem to be inexhaustible in their variety. The fact of androgynous nature of the symbol of the cross is interesting.⁷⁷ Somehow it is related to the archetype of the uroboros, an androgynous archetype, but it is also linked to the feminine archetype of the great mother. In both cases it represents four different aspects of human existence: male positive, female positive, male negative, and female negative. Somehow it represents the unity of

⁷⁶Neumann, p. 19n.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 19-51.

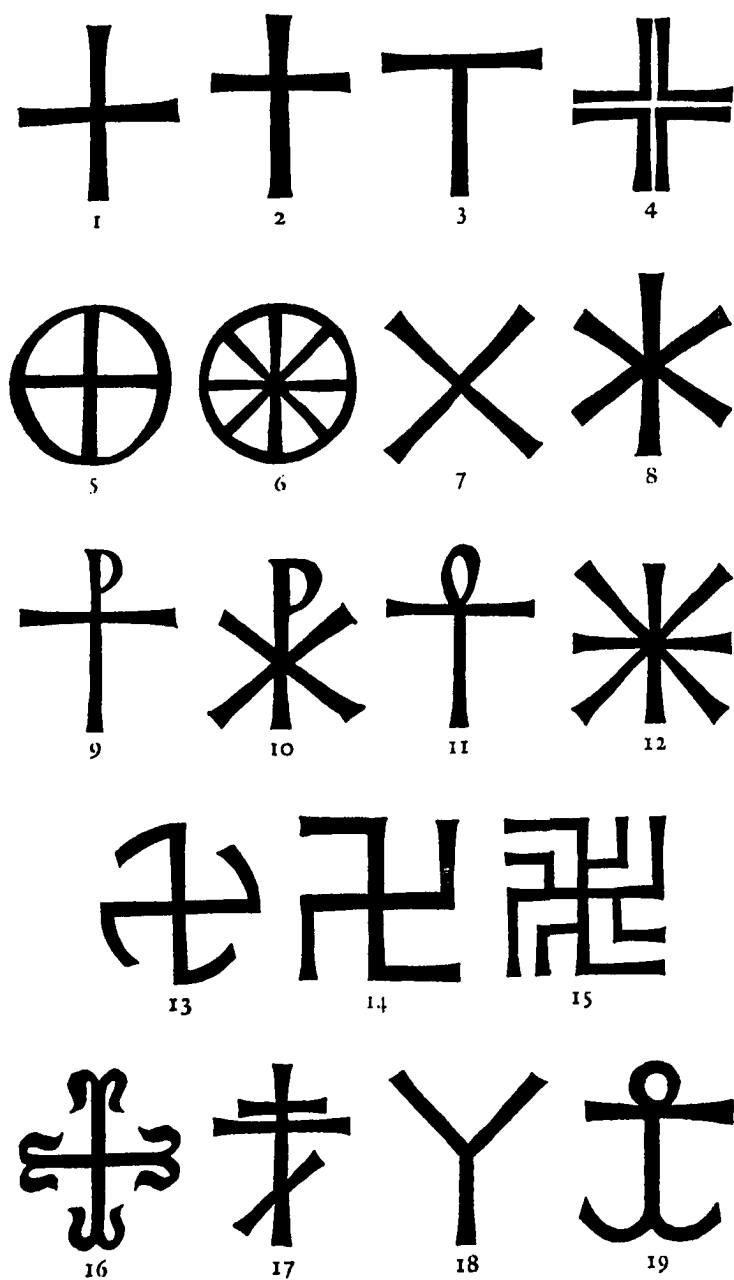


Illustration 1

these divergent aspects of human nature.

The symbol of the cross is closely related to the symbol of the tree. Both represent the feminine archetype, but have a strong male-phallic connotation as well. They represent growth and the bearing of fruit (positive) as well as death. The dead are hoisted into the treetops or are buried in tree trunks in the earth. The connotations male-female, positive-negative, life-death are all incorporated in this one symbol. In addition the sense of transformation, spiritual change and metamorphosis is consistent with the symbol.

The feminine content of the symbol of the cross points to the element of surrender: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Yet this surrender is in correspondence with the order of reality which unfolds in opposing polarities.

(b) The symbolism of the cross and the tree reaches deeply into the mythological traditions of different nations. I will quote merely two stories out of a rich tradition.⁷⁸ The Oriental tradition reports of Prince Five-Weapons who enters a forest and encounters an ogre. He tries to defeat the ogre by striking it with the right hand, the left hand,

⁷⁸These two myths are reported by Joseph Campbell, The Hero With a Thousand Faces (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 87-88, 191. See also: Kersey Graves, The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors (New York: Truth Seekers, 1960), pp. 102-133.

the right foot and the left foot. Finally he strikes it with his head. All these parts stick to the body of the ogre and Prince Five-Weapons, who is none other than the future Buddha, hangs suspended from the ogre's body. Finally, he overcomes the ogre with the weapon of truth and the ogre lets him free.

The other story refers to the Germanic myth of Odin's hanging on the tree. It is reported in these words:

I ween that I hung on the windy tree,
Hung there for nights full nine;
With the spear I was wounded, and offered I was
To Odin, myself to myself,
On the tree that none may never know
What root beneath it runs.

Again in these mythological traditions the motif of the feminine archetype is relevant. The tree, the ogre in the forest, and ultimately the cross represent ambivalent forms of the maternal tree. It symbolizes the lifegiving as well as the destructive force of the earth mother.

What hangs on the tree, the child of the tree mother, suffers death but receives immortality from her, who causes him to rise to her immortal heaven, where he partakes in her essence as giver of wisdom, as Sophia. Sacrifice and suffering are the prerequisites of the transformation conferred by her, and this law of dying and becoming is an essential part of the wisdom of the Great Goddess of living things, the goddess of all growth, psychic as well as physical.⁷⁹

Illustration 2 shows how the motif of the tree reappears in a 15th century fresco by Giovanni de Modena. It roots in a tradition which reports that the cross was

⁷⁹Neumann, p. 252.

erected at the same site which grew the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Here the ambivalent implication of the cross as a symbol for good and evil, life and death, and, as we now know, feminine and masculine is present in the midst of Christianity.

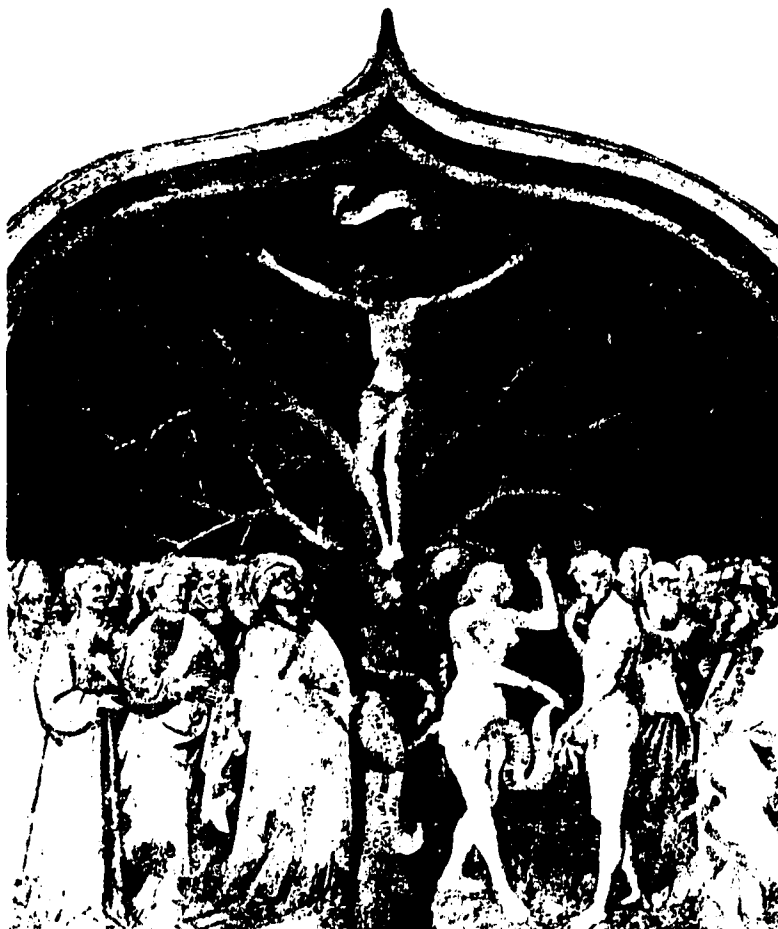


Illustration 2

The cross presents itself again as symbol of change, transformation, union of opposites, of the male sacrificing himself to the feminine, which is part of himself. The opposites coincide at the mid-point of the cross arms. This

same truth is expressed and stated directly in a totally different tradition, the Gnostic heritage of the Acts of John.

This cross of light is sometimes called the Word by me for your sakes, sometimes Mind, sometimes Jesus, sometimes Christ, sometimes Door, sometimes Way, sometimes Bread, sometimes Seed, sometimes Resurrection, sometimes Son, sometimes Father, sometimes Spirit, sometimes Life, sometimes Truth, sometimes Faith, sometimes Grace. So it is for men. But what it is in truth, as conceived by itself, as spoken between us, it is the marking off of all things, and the firm uplifting of things fixed out of things unstable, and the harmony of wisdom - of the wisdom that is harmony.

But there are forces of the right and forces of the left, potencies, angelic powers and demons, efficacies, therats, upsurges of wrath, devils, Satan, and the lower root from which the nature of Becoming issued. And so it is the cross which spiritually bound the all together, and which marked off the realm of change and the lower realm, and which caused all things to rise up.⁸⁰

This passage points out that the cross is a sign of change, wisdom, and harmony which is inherent in all things. It unites the opposing forces of the right and of the left and integrates them into a deeper unity.

From Gnosticism a bond reaches to mysticism and the brotherhood of the rosy cross. Illustration 3 shows the title page of Jacob Boehme's essay "Signatura rerum," the sign of all things.⁸¹ The cross is seen as the symbol of the four elements and the integration of opposites. Some

⁸⁰Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology (New York: Viking Press, 1964), pp. 371-375, esp. 374.

⁸¹See Alfons Rosenberg, "Christliche Symbole der Wandlung," in Wilhelm Bitter (ed.) Die Wandlungen des Menschen (Göttingen: Verlag für medizinische Psychologie, 1956), p. 84.



Illustration 3

such opposites are spirit and body, heaven and earth, fire and water, light and dark, masculine and feminine, active and passive, good and bad, manifest and occult. The cross forms the unifying center of these opposites and molds them into a whole. The cross represents the wholeness of life in movement, represented by the "wheel of the cosmos," which is inset by the zodiac. God and creation, transcendence and nature, are not opposites, but integrated in a whole.

(c) The cross mark was in use in Christianity from its very beginnings. It is unclear if a direct line from the Hebrew letter taw, which was in use in late-Judaic traditions as a symbol of salvation and survival, can be drawn to the early Christian use of the cross mark in baptism.⁸² It played without doubt a significant role in baptism, where the sign of the cross was drawn with water and oil onto the forehead of the new believer. The practice of signing the cross over a person or oneself has been preserved in the Christian tradition to this day.

This sign is an "acted word." It comprehends the life of Christ and the story of salvation into a nucleus and demonstrates the participation of the believer in this event. It provides for Christians a common symbolical sign. Tertullian is a witness for the importance this custom had

⁸²See Eduard Dinkler, Signum Crucis (Tübingen: Mohr, 1967), pp. 1-55. He gives a negative answer to the problem. Jack Finegan, The Archeology of the New Testament (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 220-248 responds positively.

in the second century;

At every forward step and movement, at every going in and going out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at the table, when we light the lamps, on couch on seat, in all ordinary actions of daily life, we trace upon the forehead the sign.

Likewise Cyril says in his Catechetical Lectures delivered in Jerusalem A.D. 348:

Let us not be ashamed to confess the crucified. Be the Cross our seal made with boldness by our fingers on our brow, and on everything: over the bread we eat, and the cups we drink; in our comings in, and goings out; before our sleep, when we lie down and when we rise up; when we are in the way, and when we are still . . . It is the sign of the faithful and the dread of the devils.⁸³

The archetype of the uroboros and the great mother is most likely unknown to these Christians, yet they insist on the act of signing oneself with the cross at all possible occasions with such urgency, that it cannot merely be a sign of remembrance. Somehow it must be filled with meaning which is beyond the consciousness of a Tertullian, which is directly enriched by these archetypes. Alfons Rosenberg has elaborated this point.⁸⁴ In this gesture history, the unconscious and body movement merge into a unity. The middle of the forehead is known to religions as the seat of a centered, deeper knowledge, of wisdom. In eastern traditions, this is the location of the "third eye" which perceives reality as a whole, without the veil of illusion. Preconsciously, the

⁸³Finegan, Ibid., p. 231.

⁸⁴Alfons Rosenberg, Kreuzmeditation (München, Kosel, 1976), pp. 105-122.

gesture of the cross wants to awaken the believer to the center of the all.

Later came in practice the "big" cross. The believer moves the hand from the forehead to the chest and from the left shoulder to the right. The body is physically ordered in the two fundamental directions of life, the horizontal and the vertical. These two lines meet for a moment and unite the opposites in silence and peace.

Rosenberg comes up with the following diagram after studying extensively symbolic material from different religious backgrounds;

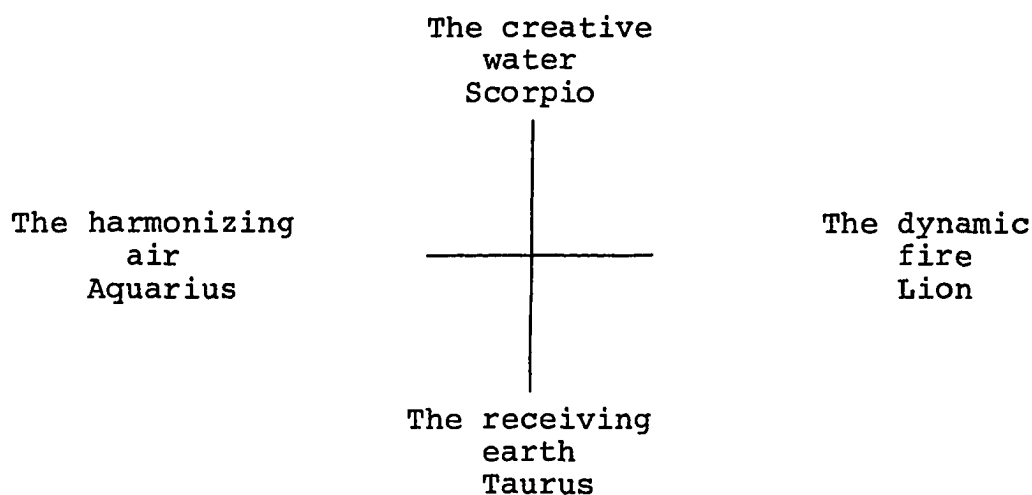


Diagram 1

Cosmic, earthly and human powers are represented and brought into an ordering relationship. He writes:

The sign of the cross is the symbol of visible immanent order--not one which we postulate, but one which is fundamental, one on which we rest. The order of the cross excludes all arbitrary action, every part is at its legitimate place and connected to all others.

Through the sign of the cross we not only confess, but we actually already implement: Your will be done. We agree to this and are, therefore, in harmony with God and his will.⁸⁵

Summary

The illumination of the symbolical and mythological background of Paul's statements about the cross has proven enriching and widening. Paul uses the cross in order to prevent any partiality in theology. He uses it to integrate contradicting theological affirmations, which state that life is at once an eternal victory as well as an enduring suffering with the rest of creation. Such paradox statements are theologically affirmed by the cross. At the same time Paul uses the cross in order to demonstrate that the Christian existence is one of constant change, willingness to surrender to reality, and reconciliation to that which is. It calls the Christian to fully immerse him/herself in a world which is already reconciled and whole, yet which is perceived by our mortal eyes as torn apart into unreconciling opposites.

These Paulinic statements are deepened by the symbolic background of the cross. It is an archetypal symbol reconciling feminine and masculine, positive and negative, life and death. It represents change and transformation in a spiritual sense and describes an existence which gives

⁸⁵Ibid.

itself away and sacrifices itself as the true, deeper wisdom of life.

The Christian faith believes and affirms the fact that the cross of Christ is the true fulfillment of this old mythological tradition. It believes that the symbol and the mythos became in Christ a living event which addresses itself as revelation to human conscious and unconscious senses. The cross tells a story, and at the same time it is a symbol of existential relevancy, which calls for a confessing response by faith.

This quality of the cross renders it highly apt at forming the perspective for contemporary pastoral theology. It points out that the transcendence of revelation and the evolving struggle of ongoing empirical reality need to be both present at the core of a pastoral theology.

CHAPTER III

THE CROSS IS THE CENTRAL THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE--
THE DISCURSIVE LEVEL OF THE CROSS

I demonstrated in the preceding part that the cross is the central perspective of theological construction in one biblical tradition of theological relevance. The cross is also, in my opinion, highly able to guide us in a model for the construction of pastoral theology. This model will be able to incorporate the important thrusts of two major schools of thinking: of kerygmatic and empirical pastoral theology. It renders superfluous some of the dangers which each one has when isolated.

THE PARTIALITY OF THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES

With the exception of Friedrich Schleiermacher, most theologians of the 19th and early 20th century considered pastoral theology mainly an application of theological truth in practice. It was not generally believed to be a discipline which contributed to basic theological understanding. Hiltner has the merit to be the first prominent pastoral theologian to propose that his discipline is a valid discipline of theological inquiry. It proceeds differently than other disciplines in that it is operation-centered and not primarily logic-centered. He writes:

The definition implies that pastoral theology is an operation-centered or function-centered branch of

theology rather than what we shall call for lack of a better name, logic-centered branch of theology. Within the whole body of divinity what is distinctive about the operation-centered inquiries such as pastoral theology is that their theological conclusions, or theory or basic principles, emerge from reflection primarily on acts or events or functions from a particular perspective.¹

This pastoral theological discipline employs both theoretical and practical inquiry. It places the knowledge gained from observation in a theological context. "The principle criteria and methods employed are themselves theological."² Thus pastoral theology goes beyond a mere "pastoral psychology, an applied theology, a pastoral practice, or even a right spirit."³

I share Hiltner's assumption that pastoral theology is a valid branch of the body of theology. This dissertation is placed within its context.⁴ It is by nature theoretical, but it has the intention to contribute to theological understanding in general. Later, I shall elaborate such a contribution. I shall show how the paradoxical theory of change discovered in Gestalt psychotherapy contributes effectively to the theological understanding of the cross.⁵

¹Seward Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 20.

²Ibid., p. 23.

³Ibid., p. 27.

⁴See above, p. 1.

⁵See below, pp. 128ff.

I affirm Hiltner's reevaluation of pastoral theology, though I disagree with his result. He ends up separating theology into two different branches: one is logic-centered and the other operation-centered. The oneness and wholeness of the theological field is lost since the deeper connection between these disciplines is unclear.⁶ Without doubt, there is an important difference between these two kinds of disciplines.

The fields which Hiltner calls logic-centered and which should better be called "kerygma-centered" focus mainly on the vertical dimension of theology, the revealed kerygma as it is reflected in the faith of the church. The operation-centered fields focus on the horizontal dimension of theology, the life of the church which is the faithful response to the kerygma. The former emphasize the distance of revelation, the latter point to revelation's participation in contemporary life. Yet both, distance and participation need each other. Distance without participation leads to dogmatism or legalism; participation without distance leads to faddism and exhaustion. Despite their different thrusts, kerygma-centered and operation-centered disciplines share a common center. This center, the cross, frees both disciplines for their unique tasks, while binding

⁶This split of the theological body is illustrated by the diagram which Hiltner uses to illustrate his models (Hiltner, p. 28). Both branches are shown as two separate blocks without inner connection.

them together to one gestalt of Christian theology.

It is my impression that Hiltner is very interested in the autonomy of pastoral theology. He fears heteronomy, the domination of one branch of theology over others. He writes:

The logic-centered fields of theology are so obviously indispensable that they have led unwittingly to a misconception, namely, that any branch of theology must proceed as they do. They find their focuses in something that is overridingly logical and necessary, such as the Bible, the interrelation of doctrines,⁷ the development of history, or the meaning of morals.

I share this rejection of the old "heteronomy" model which was in use in theological construction of the 19th century. On the other hand, a new model needs to point to an underlying relatedness and wholeness of the theological fields. It is the faith in this Jesus, who was revealed as Christ, which affects and forms life. And it is this life, this world, and reality that Christ appeared in. Christ does not merely reach the person out of a vacuum, but through and within life. Faith and life are, therefore, in a deep sense bound to each other.

The relationship of both branches of theology is further clarified by Dietrich Bonhoeffer's terms: "penultimate" and "ultimate." Faith relates to something ultimate. It is a being held captive, being wrested from sin, being set free. It is not a knowledge like other empirical

⁷Ibid., p. 21.

knowledge. It is founded upon "God's own free word, which is subject to no compulsion; for this reason it is the irreversible final word, and ultimate reality."⁸ In this sense, another dimension breaks into people's lives. It is qualitatively different from the knowledge gained from empirical observation. The ultimate, vertical reality of the holy and eternal creates a wholesome, renewing distance to everyday life.

Yet, the ultimate reaches us only in the form of the penultimate.

It is always preceded by something penultimate, some action, suffering, movement, volition, defeat, uprising, entreaty or hope, that is to say, in a quite genuine sense by a span of time, at the end of which it stands. . . . A way must be traversed, even though, in fact, there is no way that leads to this goal; this way must be pursued to the end, that is to say, to the point at which God sets an end to it. The penultimate, therefore, remains, even though the ultimate entirely annuls and invalidates it.⁹

The empirical life of the church which consists of healing, sustaining, guiding, learning, celebrating, nourishing, protecting, and relating is neither a mere application of the ultimate nor something independent from it. Within it the ultimate, Christ, participates in life today. Pastoral theology is, therefore, a theology in another direction which shares in its depth the ultimate with kerygma-centered theology.

⁸Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics (New York: Macmillan, 1955), p. 82.

⁹Ibid., p. 83.

The relationship between the ultimate and the penultimate, kerygma-centered and operation-centered theology, needs to be described as conformation. The former impresses the form of the crucified Christ onto the latter. The latter offers the form for the former. Thus, they are in a paradoxical interrelationship where both are autonomous, yet at the same time deeply related to each other, that is heteronomous. This paradox is aptly described in the words which were chosen in Nice to define the relationship of both natures of Christ. Both are "unmixed" (ἀσυγχύτως), "unchanged" (ἀτρέπτως), "unseparated" (ἀδιαιρέτως), and "undivided" (ἀχωρίστως).

A model which defines the place of pastoral theology within the whole body of divinity needs to express, therefore, autonomy and heteronomy of the theological disciplines. Paul Tillich calls this paradox "theonomy."¹⁰ I propose, therefore, as a model the form of the cross, which points to the fact that theology is conform with the appearance of Jesus Christ.¹¹ The vertical beam is made up of the kerygma-centered disciplines. The horizontal beam represents the operation-centered branches of theology. Both

¹⁰Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), II, 147-49.

¹¹By using the cross in this sense as a systematic matrix, I leave the presentational realm of the cross, symbol, and enter the discursive domain (See above p. 6). Cf. Werner Jetter, Symbol und Ritual (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978).

cross each other and are thus related to each other. By necessity they need to interfere with each other and enrich each other mutually. Yet, at the same time, they point into different directions and dimensions of the field. They deal with realities that seem to be different to our finite ways of perception, even though they are ultimately one. Therefore, they need to share their findings with each other, each modifying and affecting the result of the other. Yet, at the same time, they are autonomous, free to follow their own thrusts and methodologies. Diagram 2 illustrates this model.

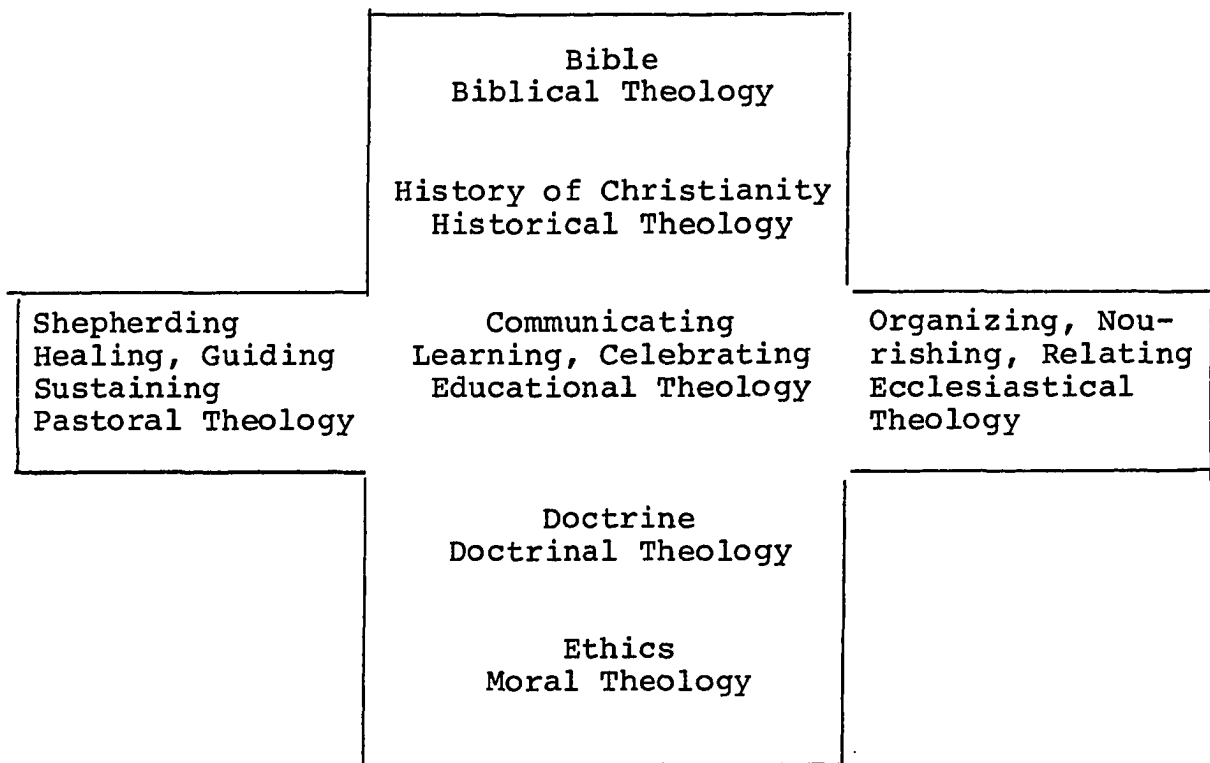


Diagram 2

The Paradoxical Interrelationship of
Theological Disciplines

FOUR WAYS OF RELATING THE EMPIRICAL AND THE KERYGMATIC IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY

The preceding part showed that theology in general is often tempted to divide reality so that one group becomes responsible for life, another for faith, one for the empirical, another for the spiritual. Now, I will show that the different models of pastoral theology, too, have in common a tendency to transfer this split into their own parameters. Later I will argue that the cross is highly apt to serve as a perspective of pastoral theology, which is able to integrate these differing dimensions of reality.

The Forensic-Kerygmatic View

Thurneysen represents this approach to pastoral theology. He is indebted to Karl Barth's theology as revelation and to his dialectical thought. Emphasis is placed upon the difference and radical otherness of the word of God as compared to other human words. Pastoral theology, therefore, relies in a final sense only on this word as it is revealed and on no other human words. By necessity, it is proclamation, witness, and confession. Human words like sciences, psychotherapy and personality theory cannot truly contribute to this its subject. When these are taken as solutions to human crisis, people would only sink deeper into despair. The true crisis of our time is a spiritual one.

We people are today like birds who were startled by the shooting of hunters and who are fluttering restlessly

through the air not knowing where to land and rest.¹²

The problems we encounter today have at their core a metabiological, metaphysical, and metapsychological quality. For their solution, a metaphysical view in its truest sense is necessary. Thurneysen mentions the example of a marriage disturbance. An analyst might diagnose it as an unresolved, father-dependency or mother-complex. Yet, this disturbance is more a symptom and not the heart of the problem. The last cause is an inability to love in both parents and children. This lack of love affects the deepest layer of a person. This layer is beyond psychological insight and only visible to the eyes of faith. Therefore, "this disturbance of life has to be seen as a disturbance of faith."¹³

The psychologist who deals with these problems brings into the situation a world-view, an assumption, a "faith." Freud's world-view was naturalistic and mechanistic; Jung's was idealistic and mystically religious. It is the task of the pastoral theologian, according to Thurneysen, to point to this "faith" dimension and to confront it with the true faith in the revelation of Christ. The psychologist's perception is human perception and reflects the closed, fallen, and erroneous human nature. The revelation of the true God is by definition "totally other" and cannot

¹²Eduard Thurneysen, Seelsorge und Psychotherapie (München: Kaiser, 1950), p. 4.

¹³Ibid., p. 5.

be reached by the tools of the scientist. The revelation is a complete turn of 180 degrees. Here, it is the person who asks for God; the person who wants to be loved; the person who is active. There, it is God who asks persons; God who demands love; God who is acting and persons who are receiving. Here, it is people feeling unlovable and unworthy; there, it is God who reconciles them with himself. Healing, new life, will, therefore, occur

where the message of the gospel is addressed to the individual. This should be done in the form of a dialogue from person to person. It aims at the awakening of spiritual life in sinful persons who were not yet, or not yet fully reached by the word of God.¹⁴

Empirical sciences belong theologically to the "law." According to Thurneysen, they are more or less concealed appeals and perscriptions to pull oneself by the bootstraps out of the abyss of one's own problems. All that these tools can do at best is to sketch out a general map of the human soul. This can be helpful in aiding the form of kerygmatic proclamation. But ultimately, only the pastoral care of souls in the light of revelation will enable people to be whole, and thereby, healthy.

Thurneysen strictly emphasizes the element of faith. It dissolves the problems of living, since all problems of living have a problem of faith at their core. The essential reality lies in the revelation of the grace of God in Christ.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 10.

This revelation is forensic to the empirical reality of life. Thurneysen's danger is the separation of reality in two opposing realities, one of faith and one of life.

The Immanent-Kerygmatic View

This view tries to eliminate totally a notion of two realities. It attempts to interpret non-religiously that which religion represented in pre-scientific time. Some thoughts of the mature Bonhoeffer and the "death of God" movement are at the roots of this view. Peter Homans approaches pastoral theology from this perspective.¹⁵ He shares Freud's negative view of religion as repression, projection and wish-fulfillment. Is it possible to reformulate the positive thrust of faith in the language and thought categories of our time? This presupposes the giving up of a metaphysical world-view as competition to a scientific world-view. That which the metaphysical notion of God, salvation, and new life tried and indeed did convey to pre-scientific people, needs to be rephrased. Homans finds the element of "distance." This distance in the midst of people's lives gave them a new perspective and strength. This distance had psychologically collapsed with the arrival of modern world-view.

Psychology is the secular way of recovering and

¹⁵Peter Homans, Theology After Freud: An Interpretive Inquiry (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970).

opening this distance to man. It liberates the libido and renders it no longer destructive but creative, playful and releasing the fantasy. Thus, it helps rediscover the myth in a secular way. It helps people rediscover the distance in their unconscious and their id-processes. The old metaphysical notion of God is replaced by fantasy, nostalgia, and hope.

He affirms a pastoral theology which aims toward release, liberation, creativity and development of fantasy. So it continues to aid persons in their long struggle for becoming narcissistic, but socially cooperative human beings. Pastoral theology is the successor of a hermeneutically oriented theology which tried to mediate "revelation" from "out there." Now the revelation occurs from within. Nevertheless, it is revelation and bears the mark of "otherness," distance, and renewal. Psychology replaces theology. However, it continues to rediscover the dimension of the "extra nos." It aims at a faith. The divine is now drawn inside the secular. Nevertheless, it stays the guiding and life-giving principle.

Let that be our epitaph for a theology that, although it from time to time confused the child and the man, the old and the new, must nevertheless remain the active past for whatever is to come.¹⁶

The transference-god is dead and "had to be

¹⁶Ibid., p. 253.

killed."¹⁷ Pastoral counseling struggles to free people from the moralistic and idealistic distortion which the super-ego effect of traditional theology brought about. Psychological knowledge and treatment took over the function of theology. They are more adequate since they do not carry with them the old transference connotation.

Consequently any final distinction between psychopathology and the psychopathology of religion is collapsed, for the theological dimension of a person's existence, rooted as it is in criticism and transformation of the super-ego, becomes the controlling methodological and anthropological reality. And once regression and fantasy are understood in similar fashion--that is, as psychological processes containing the possibility of opening up the imagination to the dimension of reality--then this theological dimension of the person's existence becomes amenable, although not exclusively amenable, to psychological analysis.¹⁸

At first look, the first and second view of pastoral theology have little in common. Rather, the second appears to be the extreme opposite of the first. Opposites are, however, closer to each other than initially assumed. Both have a strong kerygmatic orientation which conceives the reality of God as "other" and "distant" in relation to empirical reality. Homans attempts to conceive this otherness in immanent rather than metaphysical ways. "Fantasy" and "hope" are nevertheless immanent faith-elements which represent the symbolical dimension of reality rather than

¹⁷Peter Homans, "Toward a Psychology of Religion," in Le Roy Aden (ed.) Dialogue Between Theology and Psychology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 80.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 78.

the empirical. In their different ways both Thurneysen and Homans represent the vertical thrust of pastoral theology which I have named "kerygmatic."

The Forensic-Empirical View

The next two approaches represent the horizontal thrust of pastoral theology. By this I mean that they see pastoral theology addressing itself primarily to the reality and change of empirical dimensions of a person's life. Clinebell represents this view in his book Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling.¹⁹ By helping the person deal constructively with his relationships, it is assumed that the faith of this person will grow richer and deeper.

Pastoral counseling is the utilization, by a minister, of a one-to-one or small group relationship to help people handle their problems of living more adequately and grow toward fulfilling their potentialities. This is achieved by helping them reduce the inner blocks which prevent them from relating in need-satisfying ways.²⁰

Yet, this is not a goal in itself. It aims beyond the immediate results of help, caring, and change. When the individual is able to be loved and love, and thus meet some of his basic needs:

He will be able to handle this load of problems and responsibilities. He will continue to grow toward the fulfillment of his unique personhood. He will develop

¹⁹Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966).

²⁰Ibid., p. 20.

constructive relationships. His relationship with God will become increasingly meaningful. He will become a renewal agent in his family, community, and church.²¹

The crucial difference between the first two views and the third view is the understanding of faith. For Clinebell, faith is the possibility of man to find meaning in life and in relationships. Therefore, faith needs to be nurtured by the experience of sound relationships. Faith in God will then become meaningful and rich. Thurneysen particularly has a radically different understanding of faith. For him, it is not the possibility of persons to make sense. Rather, it is the obedient response of people who discover the non-sense of their lives--be it as whole as possible--in the confrontation with God's eternal life. For Thurneysen, faith is the obedient response to a personal calling, a proclamation. Nothing empirical in my life can prepare me for this message. Similarly, Homans sees people as passive recipients of their primary processes. They receive crucial answers from a place not under their control.

Another differing element between the two former and the latter approach to pastoral theology is that the two former think in terms of confrontation. Thurneysen in the dimension God-man, Homans in the dimension man-super-ego/past. Clinebell has a more positive, reconciled view of the relationship God-persons. God can be found within the

²¹Ibid.

empirical, within relationships. Answers are given and received.

This approach of pastoral theology focuses on the empirical dimension of life. Yet, it permits within this empirical dimension the forensic and ultimate aim of God, who is within it, yet transcends it.

The Immanent-Empirical View

This last approach in my summary of concepts of constructing a pastoral theology correlates the empirical and God, healing and salvation, so closely that they become nearly identical. Lapsley has advocated such a view from a process theology. Similarly to Clinebell, he asserts the importance of the empirical dimension of relationships. From a process perspective he adds the dimension of their purposive development through time.

In order to clarify his position I need to briefly enter into the concepts of process theology. The notion of "substances" which make up reality is overcome in favor of "actual occasions." They are fluid, relative, and instantaneously finite. Occasions, "nexuses" and "societies"--larger formations of occasions--make up the hierarchical matrix of reality, each contributing to its aim with its varying degrees of freedom. Human beings are the most complex and differentiated societies, and contribute potentially most significantly to the realization and developing

of God. He is principle and ongoing process at the same time. Since God is in the process of becoming--not without breaks and without thwarting by evil--salvation "must refer primarily to the preservation in the life of God of the values realized in the world, especially in the lives of men."²²

Jesus Christ represents a "creative emergent," in fact the supreme "creative emergent," in this process.

Through ministry, death and "resurrection" he set in motion the power toward love and hope which characterized primitive Christianity and which subsequently infused Western culture. Though this power has never been unambiguously expressed either inside or outside the church, it still continues to manifest itself in the self-giving idealism of many individuals and even institutions, however ambiguous.²³

Health decides over the ability to participate in the manifestation of those values which emerged in Christ. Lapsley defines health as: "the relatively active potential for appropriate functioning which any individual possesses at any given time."²⁴ Consequently, Lapsley develops six different levels of health with each level participating to a different degree in history. The greater the health potential the more relevant are the contributions to the process of God. Lapsley sees the danger of "works-righteousness," but emphasizes that this different, unauthoritarian concept

²²James N. Lapsley, Salvation and Health (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), p. 53.

²³Ibid., p. 54.

²⁴Ibid., p. 71.

of God does not support attempts to "buy" God's favor any longer. The notion of an angry God is past.

God's favor does not need to be bought; man has that. What he needs is the power to know and to respond to the lure of God toward the lure of his future, and this comes through development. In this development God himself participates, not always decisively, as we noted before, but always present. Through the gospel of Jesus Christ which has flowed into history he participates in a uniquely powerful way, enabling those who have been significantly touched by it to put back into the salvatory process what they got from it, but better, because of their own unique contributions.²⁵

Lapsley's view identifies, to a great degree, empirical reality and the process of God. God actualizes himself within life even though he participates to varying degrees in different qualities of life. Pastoral theology helps people toward greater health and, thereby, toward greater participation in God. Here, God is immanent within the empirical reality. The characteristics of this contemporary model of thought are: it is logically consistent, sensible and rationally convincing. It shares the positive world-view of sciences, it is objective, constructive, and pragmatic. Thurneysen's "revelation model" is by comparison irrational, emotional and offensive. This I see as an important difference between the empirical and kerygmatic approach to pastoral theology.

²⁵Ibid., p. 131.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CROSS

These four attempts to relate the kerygmatic and the empirical dimension within pastoral theology represent four basic possibilities: separation (Thurneysen), substitution (Homans), correlation (Clinebell), and identification (Lapsley). These basic possibilities are repeated and modified by other writers.²⁶

In my opinion, two of these four possibilities emphasize the vertical dimension of pastoral theology and two the horizontal dimension. Thurneysen and Homans emphasize the kerygmatic aspect; Clinebell and Lapsley represent the empirical aspect. The kerygmatic direction emphasizes the "extra nos," revelatory elements in pastoral theology. The empirical direction emphasizes its pragmatic, scientific dimension. Thurneysen and Homans have in mind the theologian who helps people respond to the vertical dimension in their life, either in a protestant or in a "post-protestant way. Clinebell and Homans emphasize the pastor

²⁶Thomas C. Oden, Kerygma and Counseling (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), modifies Thurneysen's thesis by his concept of an "analogy of faith," which perceives the kerygmatic as announcing the ontological reality from which the empirical is nurtured. Edward E. Thornton, Theology and Pastoral Counseling (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), proposes a view, which is a modification of Homan's thesis. Therapy and counseling are the penultimate realities (Bonhoeffer) which contain the ultimate. Don S. Browning, Atonement and Psychotherapy (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), proposes a two-way analogy between therapy and salvation. He identifies them to a great degree without losing the priority of the divine.

as counselor who helps people deal with the horizontal dimension in their life.

The following diagram 3 illustrates the relationship of these different thrusts of pastoral theology:

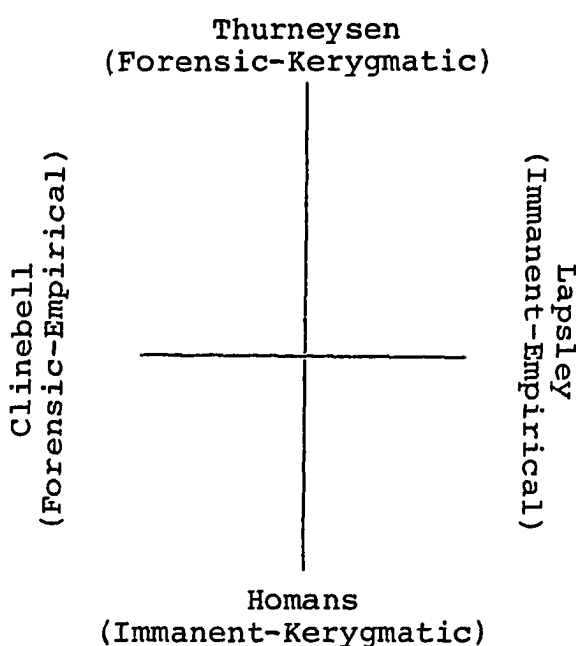


Diagram 3

I use the example of a man who comes to the pastor with unresolved grief over the loss of his wife. The kerygmatic orientation of pastoral theology advocates that the minister focuses on the man's relationship to God (Thurneysen), or to the unconscious, regressive processes at work within him (Homans). The minister should help reopen this partially or wholly closed or disturbed vertical dimension in this man's life. Both, each in his unique way, call for a connection of this man to the ultimate reality. Homans tries to conceive of the immanent form of this dimension,

Thurneysen of the metaphysical. Both affirm this ultimate reality which is at work within the phenomena of death, grief, and finiteness.

The empirical thrust of pastoral theology focuses on the penultimate and foregoes a differentiation between essence and existence. It tries to understand the behavior within the empirical field of interdependent facts. This field is of a complex nature and consists of physical, economical, biological, sociological, psychological and historical elements. Representatives of this thrust would, therefore, recommend to the minister a counseling approach which helps this man to relate to his field of experience. The discharge of emotions, support by a community, involvement in new activities, and new relationships might help this man to deal with his painful experience.

The perspective of the cross is, at this point, helpful for an integration of the positive thrusts of all these concepts of pastoral theology. They reveal their usefulness in the perspective of the cross by confronting persons with the totality of their experience. It is the task of the pastoral theology to point to both the kerygmatic and the empirical dimensions in persons' lives. The cross takes care that both are not confused with each other, nor separated from each other. Thus the cross injects into pastoral theology its paradoxical center. It is not a logical principle, but a perspective, which is gained through the

revelation of God in Christ. It integrates in a continuing union two apparently contradicting dimensions of reality to one whole. The kerygmatic thrust emphasizes the vertical thrust of the existential God-people-world relation. The empirical thrust elaborates the horizontal field of inter-related and interdependent events. This integration of both aspects within pastoral theology maps out its three-dimensional realm. Thus, the cross is an hermeneutical guide which offers an epistemological key to the nature of operation-centered theology. It crosses, by its nature, any attempts to close the open evolving encounter of these dimensions of reality.

(1) The cross as perspective of a pastoral theology validates those caring acts which are motivated by the identity of salvation and health. I have used Lapsley's concept to illustrate this thrust above. He asserts that God proceeds to realize himself where people contribute productively to the overall field of reality. The cross affirms this view. It is an immanent factor within the human history. Christ died and gave himself totally into this world. The place where his cross stood is still there and can be seen. His resurrection is the proclamation and affirmation of the changing quality of this event within human history. Lapsley is right in pointing to the different secular types of counseling, and the values contained within them. They are one constitutional element of pastoral theology which

is informed by the cross and in turn informs its current relevance.

(2) Yet, the minister would obviously not exhaust his task were he to limit his help to secular counseling. Clinebell points to the correlation of the spiritual element to the empirical. The cross is not a merely historical event which once moved history like the death of Socrates. There is a difference between Christ and Socrates. The latter, too, influenced Western thought to some degree by his life and death. The cross of Christ, however, is present in the church and is an ongoing explicit factor within a person's empirical field. It has its representative persons, acts, buildings, and communities. These are the explicitly empirical elements which the pastor brings to bear on a situation. It is important that a minister not merely rely on his individual counseling skills. He/she can utilize the unique assets he/she has as the representative of a religious organization. Clinebell emphasizes:

His uniqueness as a counselor is derived from his training, his social and symbolic role, the setting within which he counsels, certain tools he uses, and his explicit goal of spiritual growth.²⁷

By involving a person into the ongoing life of the existing Christian community, offering participation in a grief group, reading an appropriate passage from the Bible, the

²⁷Clinebell, p. 49.

minister emphasizes the healing potential of the Christian community available in this man's field of experience.²⁸

The church, its resources and symbols, are an important element of pastoral theology.

(3) The cross integrates and reconciles the empirical with the kerygmatic dimension. The great difference between these two is the flow of energy. Within the empirical field there is a circular flow of energy. We are active and passive. We are dependent on the field we live in. But we are nevertheless able to penetrate this field intellectually, to alter, and to modify it. At least potentially we know, analyze, question, act, and change, with the intention toward more productivity, usefulness, and health. In the kerygmatic dimension human existence is rather passive and the object of activity. Here he is not to judge, but to let be, not to talk, but to listen, not to act, but to surrender, not to progress, but to regress to an highly aware state of readiness. Homan enriches pastoral theology with the element of regression, fantasy, and the unconscious. The unconscious in its widest sense, with its influence through dreams, intuitions, fantasies, and sensations is material the pastor needs to be in tune with. It is a part of the religious experience and has left its traces in the biblical documents. Jungian approaches to biblical tales and

²⁸Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Mental Health Through Christian Community (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), pp. 13ff.

materials reveal this clearly. The unconscious elements of scripture, sacraments, and symbols, stimulate the unconscious of the person and enrich his life with a depth which is hard to describe. This power is an ongoing experience which breaks through the ambiguities of human activities with clear answers. These answers transcend the empirical categories of "more" or "less useful," and approximate the absolute categories of "right" versus "wrong."

Boisen had several serious emotional breakdowns. His unconscious processes were in these episodes erratic and in need of professional help. Yet, he is an example of this unconscious element in pastoral theology. He writes:

And yet I still feel that the story of these last twenty years is not wholly a mistake. I believe that there is in it a deeper meaning. In spite of the violence of the disturbance, I have not felt myself deserted. I have come through feeling that there has been no break in the purpose of all these years.²⁹

Boisen was convinced that God talked to him through his unconscious. This faith brought about decisive impulses for the pastoral care movement. The unconscious is an important factor of pastoral theology and the minister needs to gain experience through listening to his own unconscious process. This aspect of pastoral theology involves faith. The individual is asked to surrender to it and to believe.

²⁹Anton Boisen, Out of the Depth (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 96.

(4) The vertical dimension of the cross ultimately stretches beyond the individual and history, and points to God as creator, and redeeming power. Thurneysen was quoted as representative of this thrust of pastoral theology. The kerygmatic dimension of pastoral theology involves a danger and a risk. A person who is not ready for it and who intends to use it as an affirmation of his own concepts can be severely disturbed or misled by it. The psychotic is an example of the immanent force of this dimension. The pharisee is an example for the transcendent power of misleading ego-inflation. Yet, despite these dangers, the great truth revealed at the cross is valid. At the core of this reality is a loving, reconciling and creating God who triumphs within this ambiguous, broken field of empirical facts. The objective, kerygmatic perspective encourages the pastor to bring God as the transcendent foundation of life into awareness, to use the witness of scriptures proclaimed as revelation, and to provide the quiet and the space, so that God himself can come to word, act, and heal.

The cross as perspective integrates all four of these thrusts of pastoral theology. They supplement and correct each other. Only all four together make up the whole matrix of pastoral theology, which consists of the empirical as well as the non-empirical dimension.

Diagram 4 will take into account these four thrusts of pastoral theology: the immanent-empirical, the forensic-

empirical, the immanent-kerygmatic, and the forensic-kerygmatic. Some of the pastoral functions pertaining to each dimension are listed. The arrows represent the integrating and supplementing function of the perspective of the cross. The diagram, however, simplifies, the matrix of

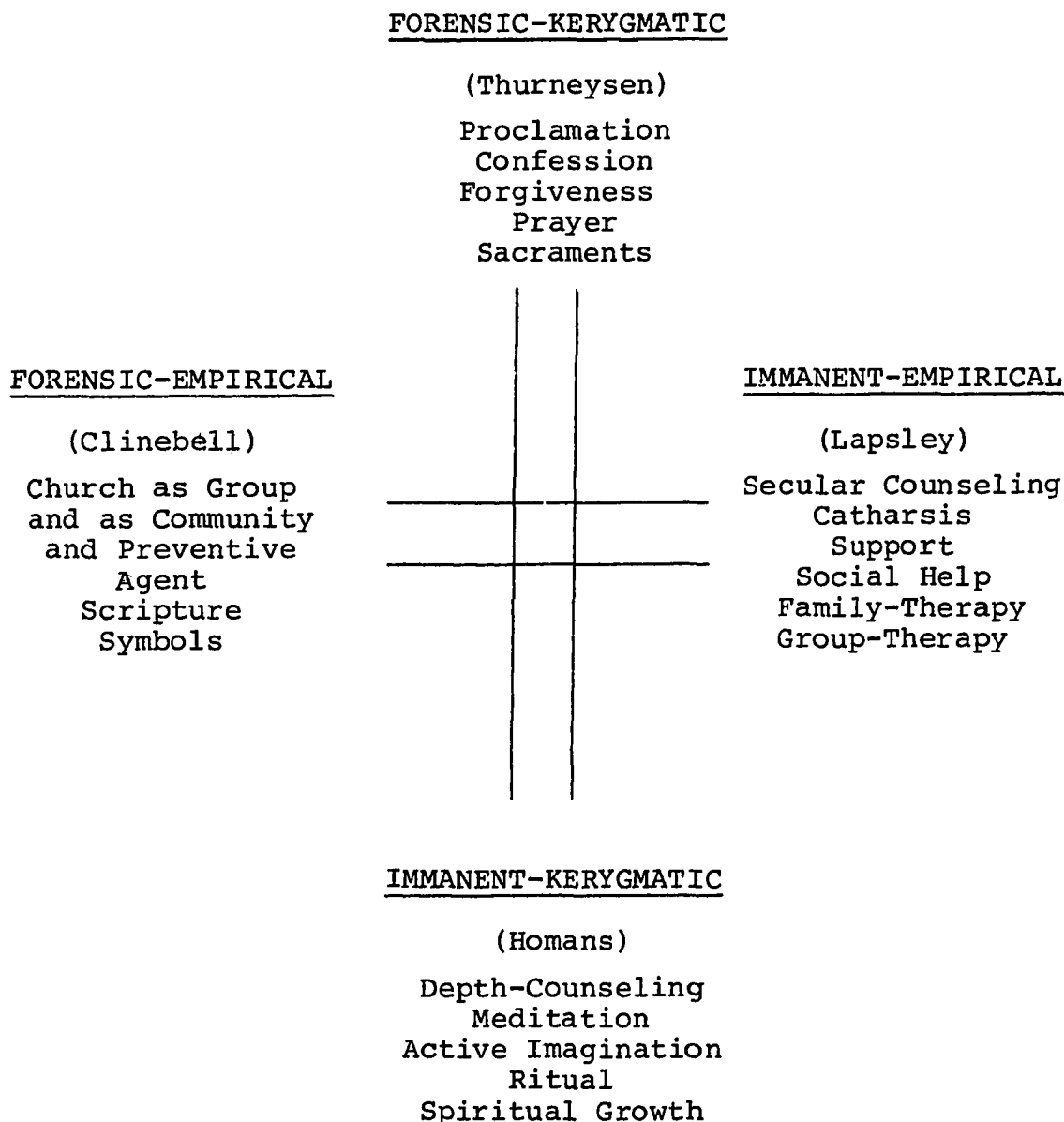


Diagram 4

The Matrix of Pastoral Theology

of pastoral theology. It does not reflect its three dimensional nature, which consists of the interrelated empirical field which comes into contact with the transcendent dimension in all various aspects.

I have demonstrated in Chapter II how Paul corrects the one-sidedness of his opponents with the theological perspective of the cross. The perspective of the cross in pastoral theology serves a similar function. Here, too, it corrects the built in partiality of the different thrusts. Following, I will briefly list some of the dangers which arise when either thrust, the kerygmatic or the empirical, are used one-sidedly.

(1) The cross helps the empirical thrust to steer free from the suction of a particular culture and its implicit tendency to be partial. Pastoral theology unwillingly becomes the prey of the shortcomings of the scientific assumptions it is based on. Each scientific mode, be it Freudian, Rogerian, Jungian, Gestalt, etc., has implicit certain philosophical assumptions. This is by necessity so. The cross helps to point out where these presuppositions limit other dimensions of reality. An extreme example are the "German Christians." They sacrificed the biblical and transcendent dimension in favor of a "modern," contemporary theory of progress. The source of this new outlook was Nazi-ideology. They were unable to gain a critical distance to this ideology. The cross and the implicit kerygmatic

thrust would have helped to bring about such distance as Barth's theology proved. The same may be important for a pastoral theology which takes its premises entirely from process philosophy. It can become dangerous to define progress in entirely Western terms as Vietnam demonstrated. The danger of all empirical concepts consists in a loss of the basic paradox and mystery of the whole of reality.

A second danger for the empirical thrust is the loss of tradition and a biblical foundation. Thus, pastoral theology may lose the unifying continuity of the church throughout the centuries. Immediate, contemporary interests become the guiding principle and lead to a splitting of theology into "interest groups" advocating this or another frame of reference. The cross confronts empiricism with the finiteness and imperfection of reality. It gathers all Christians around the "once and for all" center of God's gratuitous action: Christ.

A third danger of the empirical thrust is its tendency of losing the dimension of faith. Reason, scientific insight, and technique become the sufficient means to establish this operation-oriented branch of theology. The element of encounter, personal address, and trust into something entirely surprising and unpredictable disappears. The cross, however, is a deeply offensive event, which offends esthetical, moral, and rational values. It challenges people to "leap" into faith and to forego the security of

consistent logic.

(2) The cross is also the crisis of an absolute kerygmatic thrust. It emphasizes that God loved this world so much that he gave his son. Since it is this reality which is loved by God, it is the task of theology to penetrate as deeply into the realm of this world as possible and to utilize all possible tools available. The cross is an affirmation of the basic sanctity and goodness of reality since it is chosen by God despite its demonic aspects. The kerygmatic view talks too often too negatively and without love about empirical reality. To believe in the gospel does not imply neglect of sciences.

A second criticism, which is related to the first, is the insight gained at the cross, that it is unchristian to separate God and world. The cross was erected at Golgotha, a religiously unclean and untraditional place. It overstepped radically conventional ways of conceiving God. Thus, Paul calls it the end of the law and the letter. The kerygmatic thrust is often content with a repetition of traditional concepts and language which separates it from the rest of academic and daily life. It is not enough to repeatedly explain the Christian documents, even if this repetition brings new and valuable insights. It must be accompanied by the serious work of spelling out concrete, understandable concepts of who Christ is for us today. It is the exciting appearance of pastoral theology as a

contemporary theological discipline which has opened this debate anew and given meaningful help. It is a good example of how "concrete formation" of Christ has to be risked in the midst of the ambiguities and finiteness of reality.

THE PARADOXICAL NATURE OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY

Several times I have already pointed to the paradox which is contained in the perspective of the cross. The dictionary defines paradox as "a claim which expresses its pointed truth in terms apparently embracing a contradiction."³⁰ The paradox claim of the cross in pastoral theology is that God works healing entirely within the empirical field of experience which can be reached by sciences, and that he works at the same time healing beyond and without this field.

Even though a paradox resists an ultimate grasp by reason, it is possible to enlarge and clarify it. The cross as paradoxical perspective of pastoral theology ensures its wholistic orientation. God in Christ suffered and died the atheistic death at the stake. The Christian faith believes that within this absurd event God broke through the human confinement radically questioning all human dividing of reality. It is unfortunate that particularly popular Christian thinking has been unwilling to comprehend

³⁰"Paradox," in Das Grosse Brockhaus Enzyklopädie (Stuttgart: Brockhaus, 1955), VIII, 736.

contradiction and dialectics in its conception of God.³¹ Those oriented toward experiential theology blocked the dimension of revelation; rational theology avoided the irrational; and ethical concern was unwilling to reconcile and accept the dimension of evil and darkness. The emphasis of salvation denied the element of joy and worldliness. An integrative, reconciling nature of the Christian revelation emphasizes a wholistic perspective which does not level differences nor avoid them. Moltmann points to the element of maturity involved in such a Christian perspective.

In psychological perspective the lack of sensitivity for the other and his unique profile is a sign of a weak ego. One is not able to stand one's own strangeness in relation to the other and withdraws into the circle of those who think the same. Or one gives up the strangeness of the Christian existence and adapts to those from whom one expects acceptance and recognition.³²

Pastoral theology in the perspective of the cross is formed by this maturity. It does not negate the difference between the spiritual and the health dimension in the shepherding care of the pastor. Yet, it sees the higher integration of both in a wholistic perception of reality.

Secondly, the paradoxical nature of the perspective of the cross protects the mystery of being. Our Western mind is formed by a concept, which sees reality as the realizable. We think pragmatically and operationally in order

³¹Jürgen Moltmann, Der gekreuzigte Gott (München: Kaiser, 1972), pp. 30-33.

³²Ibid., p. 30.

to influence, to utilize, and to change. This has been the blessing of Galilean thought. This view has brought about a dramatic change for us and our environment. On the other hand, we have lost or tried to lose the sense for mystery. By this I mean an inactive, aware recognition of that dimension of reality which transcends our empirical, interdependent net of data. The perspective of the cross asserts God's truth in Christ, proclaims life in the midst of death, victory in defeat, and active participation in surrender. It demythologizes our implicit myths about, i.e., aging, death, poverty, unproductivity, etc. At the same time, the cross remythologizes reality. It points to a dimension of reality which transcends our perceptions and which can justly be called mysterious.

I want to illustrate this with the example of a flower. I can perceive it biologically. I can analyze its leaves, stem, and blossom. I can, possibly, alter its appearance altogether by crossbreeding it with other species. Thus, I can make it healthier, sturdier, more fruitful. At the same time I am partial. I divide the plant and look at the different components. I forget that the whole is more than the sum of its components. I perceive the flower as "it" in Buber's terms. Yet, I can also allow the plant to impress me as a whole. Then, I perceive its uniqueness, its beauty, its createdness, and the element of eternity which is at the root of its being. Now I allow the flower to

affect me as a "you." The cross as a perspective in pastoral theology allows the pastor to perceive reality simultaneously as "it" and "you," actively and passively, as something to create and form, to accept, adore, and suffer. The mysterious quality of the cross does not perceive reality irrationally, or antirationally, but superrationally. The perspective of the cross renders theology beyond the traditional alternatives of theism or atheism, or obedience or rebellion.³³

Thirdly, the cross as perspective in pastoral theology ends the distanced, speculative nature of theology, opening it up to the event and process nature of both God and reality. What happens at the cross is an event and reveals the event character of pastoral theology. It is theology in participation, compassion, and immediacy of experience. This complicates theology because its subject is no longer static and "given." Reflection and participation occur in a feedback loop which affects and changes both. In this perspective God is no longer another reality, person, or moral instance, but a "you" event.

Shepherding, therefore, is participation in the process of the cross by means of counseling, ritual, meditation, and proclamation. In this process both thrusts, the horizontal and the vertical, are forever changing. Neither God, nor

³³Ibid., pp. 236-243.

the human being, nor the context of their encounter stay the same. Each affects the other and their mutual interaction occurs within the wider matrix of a changing, evolving three-dimensional field. This process of the cross has a direction. It aims at new life, a mature person, a purified heart, and ultimately the kingdom of God. Shepherding in the perspective of the cross is, therefore, participation in the eschatological hope and directedness of the church.

CHAPTER IV

THE CROSS IS THE CENTRAL PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE--

THE EMPIRICAL LEVEL OF THE CROSS

After having clarified the formal thrust of the cross in its paradox of distance and participation, I turn now to human experience as it is illuminated by the cross and changes under its impact. In Chapter II it was stated that the cross shapes the life of people by working within them a conversion. This conversion consists of a change of orientation, of attitude, and of concerns. This chapter will throw a clearer light on the nature and direction of this conversion.

An analogy in depth-analytically oriented psychotherapy will be pointed out. It is my assumption that both traditions, the theological and the scientific, describe analogous phenomena. Three basic stages can be isolated in each field. These three stages are: (1) a state of alienation and suffering, which is characterized by holding on to an idealized self-concept; (2) a state of despair and hopelessness, which is characterized by the person's letting go of any illusions; (3) a state of authenticity and new life, which shows a transformation of the person by a power beyond his grasp. The different stages in this process will be treated from the two viewpoints: (1) the theological, and (2) the psychotherapeutic.

A final part of this chapter will briefly characterize the paradoxical nature of conversion and growth. The nature of the analogy will be explained from the perspective of the cross. Implications for the attitude of the pastoral counselor will be pointed out.

HOLDING ON

In Theology

Being in Adam. For Paul, change is mainly a switch of dominion. The Christian changes from the dominion of Adam to the dominion and power of Christ (Rom. 5). The cross connects and separates those two spheres. The change is, therefore, described as "dying with him" (Rom. 6:8), "being crucified with him" (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:19), and "being buried with him" (Rom. 6:4).

Another word for Adam is sin. This latter term is often loaded with ethical implications. Paul's understanding and qualification of sin as "being in Adam" shows clearly that sin is not primarily an ethical term. It describes the basic attitude and orientation of a person.

The biblical story of creation talks about Adam as someone who wants to be like God. He is gripped by a deep distrust against God and a hunger for power. Unwilling to accept his own finiteness and limits, he eats from the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. The tragic outcome shows that Adam achieved the exact opposite of that

which he so much desired. He wanted freedom and ended up enslaved by fear of death. He wanted security and ended up outside the paradise worried about the troubles of the next day.

What is Adam's great sin? Is it his desire for autonomy? Or, is it his wish to get ahead in life, to make something, to create and be creative? This alone would not have left Adam so worthy of being remembered. The transgression of Adam is distrust in God and, thereby, distrust in himself. The sin is his unwillingness to accept his own finiteness, createdness, and naivete about the ultimate. His desire for autonomy and creativity is evil because it is born out of a distrusting antagony to the creator. It is not the fruit of harmony and unity with God.

One sign of Adam's unwillingness to acknowledge harmony between himself and God is his grip for the fruit. With his own hands, he holds on to something which he hopes to use against God. With his hands, he holds on to something to stop the flow of time, to guard himself from finiteness. The tragic and comic element of the story is that Adam holds on to something so finite and unstable as a fruit. Paul sees a parallel between a "pious man's" holding on to the law and Adam's grasping. Even more tragic and confusing is distrust in God when it appears in the mask of the pious person. Yet, he/she uses the law as Adam uses the fruit--as defense against a life which is open to God.

Now the hand holds on to the law which is more deeply God-given than the apple.

Paul uses a specific term to describe this sphere and dominion of Adam. It is "flesh" (sarx). It denotes the distorted direction of human nature, its twisted striving. "Flesh" is stigmatized by distrust in God. Therefore, persons need to avail themselves of their life. They want to own what they have received as gift. "Flesh" is the attitude towards life that wants to hold on to it, own it, and shape it according to one's own wishes and reason. "Flesh" is delusion since it searches for life where it is not. As Bultmann states so aptly:

Creation is given to man. To search life within it, implies the arrogance of searching life in the available, that is to avail oneself of life. The essential sin is the delusion not to receive life as a gift from the creator, but to create it out of one's own power, to live out of oneself rather than out of God.¹

A theology of glory. Luther continues, in his own terms, this Paulinic distinction between being "in Adam" and "in Christ." He contrasts two opposite ways of theologizing with each other. He calls the one "theology of glory" and the other "theology of the cross." Cross and glory are usually separate chapters in systematic thoughts of salvation. For Luther, however, they are not merely chapters of theology but different kinds of theology. They

¹Rudolf Bultmann, Theologie des Neuen Testaments (Tübingen: Mohr, 1964), p. 233.

form perspectival centers for all theological statements.²

This important distinction appears in his "Heidelberg disputation" which dates from April, 1518. He writes there:

Who can legitimately be called a theologian?

He is not worth calling a theologian who seeks to interpret the invisible things of God on the basis of the things that have been created. (Thesis 19)

But he is worth calling a theologian who understands the visible and hidden parts of God to mean the passion and the cross. (Thesis 20)

The theologian of glory says bad is good and good is bad. The theologian of the cross calls them by their proper name. (Thesis 21)³

Referring to Rom. 1:20-22, Luther discredits a theology which tries to avail itself of God with the help of created things. The gist of Luther's argument is better understood if "things that have been created" is replaced by the modern terms nature, history, and personality.⁴ A "theologian of glory" is a theologian who, out of distrust to God, holds on to these three created things to secure both knowledge of God and his/her own existence over against God. This attitude of basic distrust and distortion is expressed in the final sentence: "the theologian of glory says bad is good and good is bad."

²Walter von Loewenich, Luthers Theologia Crucis (Witten: Luther, 1967), p. 18.

³Martin Luther, Early Theological Works (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 290-294.

⁴Loewenich, p. 19.

Contrary to popular assumptions, Luther does not identify a religious or Christian attitude as such with "being in Christ." He is familiar with a Christian religious rationalism and moralism which he counts among the "works." By these "works" man intends to hold on to his distrust and unbelief.

As long as a man does not know Christ he does not know God as hidden in sufferings. Such a man, therefore, prefers works to sufferings, and glory to the cross: he prefers power to weakness, wisdom to foolishness, and at all times good for evil. . . . Thus the friends of the cross say that the cross is good and that the works are evil, because through the cross works are destroyed and the old Adam, who is rather inclined to be made stronger by good works, is crucified.⁵

"Religion." This same distinction appears, finally, in thoughts and writings of Bonhoeffer. He distinguishes between "religion" and "faith."

(Thus it is) certain that the cross destroyed the equation: religion equals happiness. . . . The difference between Christianity and religion is clear; here is grace, there is happiness, here is cross and there the crown, here God and there man.⁶

In 1944 he says boldly: "Jesus does not call us to a new religion, but to life."

What is "religion"? The underlying thought is that "religious man" conceives himself as "specially favoured."⁷

⁵Luther, pp. 291f.

⁶Quoted by Eberhard Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (München: Kaiser, 1971), p. 84. (My translation).

⁷Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. 281.

Again, this is to be understood as a defense against God. It consists in separating oneself from the reality of the world and, thereby, from the reality of God. The split shows in five characteristics of the "religious" world-view. (1) The religious person separates him/herself from the world by individualism. He/she leaves the world to itself by cultivating asceticism or conversion. (2) "Religion" withdraws into metaphysics. By constructing a second reality over and above the earthly reality, it has a convenient way out. (3) It has a "deus ex machina" concept. God is here a stop-gap solution and not to be encountered in the center of life. A "religious" person uses God to avoid facing his own finiteness. (4) For "religion," God is a province in his life. God fits snugly into all other values as one of many. Now one is loyal to his/her nation, now to business interests, now to feelings of superior favoredness--and then there is a time set aside for God. (5) Finally, the religion uses God as a privilege, which favors one's own advantages.⁸

Bonhoeffer, however, does not justify modern atheistic profanism. This is an equally destructive way of avoiding God and reality. Prenter stated this point:

So Bonhoeffer does not say that one can escape religious idolatry by no longer coming to God in one's need,

⁸Ibid., pp. 280f; compare also Eberhard Bethge, "Bonhoeffer's Life and Theology" in Ronald Smith (ed.) World Come of Age (London: Collins, 1967), pp. 79f.

or by trying to replace religious idolatry by an irreligious atheism, say in the form of a Christianity without the cultus, a this-worldly, merely ethical Christianity. This kind of thing would not be a theologia crucis at all, but an irreligious, atheistic theology of glory.⁹

This loss of creatureliness,¹⁰ or true humanness, shows itself in the human knowledge of good and evil (Genesis). Knowledge presupposes judgement, and judgement implies distance. The person in harmony with God knows only God, and spontaneously and immediately acts in accordance with God. The Pharisee is the image of the person in conflict and in distance.

For man in the state of disunion good consists in passing judgement, and the ultimate criterion is man himself. Knowing good and evil, man is essentially a judge. As a judge he is like God, except that every judgement he delivers falls back upon himself. In attacking man as a judge, Jesus is demanding the conversion of his entire being and he shows that precisely in the extreme realization of his good he is ungodly and a sinner. Jesus demands that the knowledge of good and evil shall be overcome; he demands unity with God. . . .

The Pharisee's action is clearly a judgement of the other man; it seeks for a public judgement, even though it be only in the public view of his own self; it desires to be seen, to be judged, and, if only in the sight of his own self, to be acknowledged as good.¹¹

Human existence is characterized by its intention to make an impression on some audience, be it others,

⁹Regin Prenter, "Bonhoeffer and the Young Luther," in Smith, p. 170.

¹⁰Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Creation and Temptation (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 72.

¹¹Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics (New York: Macmillan, 1955), pp. 154f.

oneself, or God. Wanting to impress someone implies that I am separated from this person who is to judge me. It also implies the situation of a courtroom and a matter in conflict to be decided. This, however, is the attitude of Adam, of conflict, and of resistance to the immediacy of mutual love, simplicity, and harmony.

The person who knows him/herself as the source of good and evil, who distances in order to judge, who impresses rather than expresses, is the person with two souls. He/she tries to serve two gods at the same time and uses all intelligence to figure out what is right and good. It is of no avail if a person relies on reason, ethical fanaticism, conscience, duty, absolute freedom, or private virtuousness, trying to be the best of persons. As long as he/she does not have the simplicity and wisdom of Christ, he/she will stay inhuman. This sophisticated person is, therefore, paradoxically a fool precisely because of this sophistication.

To be simple means to trust God, to be single-hearted. This simplicity is also the highest wisdom. "The wise man is the one who sees reality as it is, and who sees into the depth of things. This is why only that person is wise who sees reality in God."¹²

Reason, morals, conscience, duty, free

¹²Ibid., p. 7.

responsibility, or silent virtue are not false, destructive, or evil in themselves. They become evil by the use of people who want to defend themselves from reality and God. Used by persons, who accept their humanness with simplicity and wisdom, neither reason, morals or "knowledge" are destructive.

Sin and resistance. In the light of a theology of the cross, sin is to be understood as resistance against God and life. This resistance grows out of distrust in God and in the reality he created. This resistance is an avoidance of letting go of created principles of either a secular or a "religious" nature. With the help of these principles persons try to stop the flow of life that rests upon the living and creating God. Thus, we try to avoid pain and lead an "a-pathetic" life. This sin was at the root of the tragedy of the cross. Jesus lived a life in the immediate contact and connection of the Father. He was of a startling immediacy and spontaneity in his attitude toward the law, religious representatives and sinners. He did not follow abstract principles. He acted in each situation in a way that surprised and startled those around him. This creative newness and freshness which resists all systematic ordering around an abstract principle arose out of his close harmony with God. The representatives of "religion" perceived him as an immediate threat to their principles and control of people, themselves, and God. The

gospels imply that this finally led to his death at the cross.

In Psychotherapy

Interrupting. Modern psychotherapy, in particular humanistic psychology, has moved away from the medical model which saw mental and emotional problems in living as illnesses similar to physical ailments. Without excluding the physical component in emotional suffering, modern psychotherapy understands abnormal functioning as a growth disorder.¹³ What is disturbed is not a part of ourselves, but our whole way of relating to our own self. Emotional disorders "are disorders of the functioning and growth of the self."¹⁴

This psychotherapeutic development credits human nature with an innate thrust toward growth and wholeness. Horney sees within man:

An alive and untiring striving toward greater knowledge about himself and the world around him, toward deeper religious experiences, toward developing greater spiritual powers and greater moral courage, toward greater achievements in all fields, and toward better ways of living.¹⁵

¹³Frederick S. Perls, Gestalt Therapy Verbatim (Lafayette, CA: Real People Press, 1969), p. 28.

¹⁴Joel Latner, The Gestalt Therapy Book (New York: Bantam, 1973), p. 98.

¹⁵Karen Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth (New York: Norton, 1950), p. 377.

Others to have researched this thrust are Rogers,¹⁶ Erikson,¹⁷ and Maslow.¹⁸

Due to bad experiences in childhood, our human situation as such, and a general tendency to avoid pain, we all have learned to distance ourselves from our self and the ever-ongoing, novel flow of experience which we find ourselves immersed in. We do not trust life in its totality and complexity and, crippled by vague fears, actualize a concept and an image of what we want reality and ourselves to be. In Gestalt therapy emotional and mental disorders are interferences with the process of experiencing fully the ongoing reality. They are a defensive attitude which interrupts the full awareness of the here and now reality inside and outside of myself. The deeper the disturbance is, the more of reality is blotted out, disowned, and interrupted. Perls states:

We make the peculiar discovery that no one of us is complete, that every one of us has holes in his personality. . . . Where something should be, there is nothing. Many people have no souls. Others have no genitals. Some have no heart; all their energy goes into computing, thinking. Others have no legs to stand on. Many people have no eyes.¹⁹

¹⁶Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person, a Therapist's View of Psychotherapy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961).

¹⁷Erik Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: International Universities Press, 1959).

¹⁸Abraham H. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968).

¹⁹Perls, p. 36.

We interrupt the process of experiencing, precisely in the moment when we begin to experience something unpleasant. In this respect, we are like those who Luther calls the enemies of the cross of Christ in that we prefer "at all times good for evil."²⁰

As an example I use client N. He is 21 years old. He complained of anxiety, depression and loneliness. He started his second session by becoming aware of his ongoing experience. He reported that he is aware of the chair, that it feels good to sit down. He became aware of the room. His inner awareness perceived pain in his muscles. He explored the pain. He noticed contracting the muscles in his neck, shoulders and upper arms. He continued his exploration by contracting more strongly. His face showed signs of anger. He then began to smile and look apologetically at me. I shared with him my perception of his interrupting his experience and turning towards me. He felt he could not go on, but he remembered an event of the day. In his perception, his boss had ridiculed him and put him down. He told this story with much smiling and body movement.

This client interrupts his experience when he begins to feel and live an aspect of his true self which is unacceptable to him. In his case this side of his self is

²⁰See above, p. 133.

anger. As soon as he gets in touch with anger he interrupts with different techniques. He interrupts his physical experience by contracting and squeezing. He interrupts his emotional experience by smiling and apologizing. He interrupts his expressive experience by jumping out of the here and now into the telling of a past experience.

The status quo. We interrupt the ongoing process to avoid pain and to hold on to the status quo. Thus, we try to control the situation and ensure happiness, acceptance, and love. The desire is to be able to predict and guarantee the unpredictable. Through interrupting the open process, we try to own the status quo of our situation, our relationships, and ultimately our destiny.

I observe the same paradox as in Adam's case. The one who wants to control ends up being controlled by his own control. The person who wants to avoid pain suffers immensely by this very avoidance. The client who came to me for help found himself out of control in his relationships. He tried to earn love and favor, but ended up putting everybody off by his constant smiling and compliant behavior. So, he had no friends at all. He wanted to avoid tension and pain which prevented him from sleeping and relaxing properly. One underlying motivation behind interrupting the free flow of experience is the desire to make the outcome of all interactions predictably pleasant.

Berne calls the maneuvers that set in, once

experience has been interrupted, transactions within the higher context of a game. "A game is an ongoing series of complementary ulterior transactions progressing to a well-defined, predictable outcome."²¹ Berne has offered a most comprehensive and intelligent analysis of games.²² I will mention games here only in passing. They are the content of what Perls calls the "first layer."

The first layer we encounter is what I call the Eric Berne layer, or the Sigmund Freud layer, or the phony layer, where we play games, play roles. It is identical with Helene Deutsch's description of the "as if" person. We behave as we are big shots, as if we are nincompoops, as if we are pupils, as if we are ladies, as if we are bitches, etc. It is always the "as if" attitudes that require that we live up to a concept, live up to a fantasy that we or others have created whether it comes out as a curse or as an ideal.²³

With these games, we hold on to a concept of ourselves which earns and ensures love from others and God.

James lists some games played in churches. She describes at length the game: "I'm only trying to help you."

One way an "I'm only trying to help you" game is initiated is when a parishioner brings a problem to the pastor and asks for advice he really doesn't want. Acting as nurturing parent the pastor is hooked into the game. He tries to give advice (Why don't you. . .)

²¹Eric Berne, Games People Play (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 48.

²²Ibid., pp. 48-65.

²³Frederick S. Perls, "Four Lectures," in Joen Fagan and Irma L. Shepherd (eds.) Gestalt Therapy Now (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 20.

but all his suggestions are turned down (Yes, but that won't work because . . .). The pastor may try again to give advice, and again find it rejected with "Yes, but. . ." After several attempts to help are encountered with "Yes, but. . ." the pastor begins to feel bewildered by the "ungrateful people" whom he "was only trying to help."²⁴

Self-concept realization. How do we get to a position where we interrupt our life-process, hang on to the status quo by playing games? The climate where this behavior grows is characterized by basic distrust and basic anxiety. We all have been exposed to it. This seems to be our human condition. Relationships of people with each other and with God lack warmth and affection in this environment. They are, rather, characterized by domination, overprotection, intimidation, irritability, overexactness, indifference, etc. The child feels unacceptable and cold.

Since we are not loved, and--so we assume--not loveable by just being our true selves, we begin to develop ideal selves. We are helpless for a while, but not for long. We begin to actively react. Depending on a given temperament and the contingencies of the environment, a child "may try to cling to the most powerful person around, try to rebel and fight, to shut others out of his inner

²⁴Muriel M. James, Born to Love, Transactional Analysis in the Church (Reading, NY: Addison-Wesley, 1973), p. 101.

life and withdraw emotionally from them."²⁵

Riemann has shown how we all have four basic tendencies and how we use our basic anxiety for the formation of an ideal self.

(1) The anxiety of self-surrender, which is experienced as loss of self and dependency;

(2) The anxiety of autonomy, which is experienced as loss of love and isolation;

(3) The anxiety of change, which is experienced as loss and insecurity; and

(4) The anxiety of necessity, which is experienced as finality and loss of liberty.

All possible anxieties are always forms of these four basic tendencies and are related to the four basic impulses of man, which mutually complement and contradict each other: the need for self-preservation and separation and its opposite the need for self-surrender and belonging; and on the other hand the need for duration and security and its opposite the need for change and risk.²⁶

The ideal self is centered around a concept, a principle.

The following four basic ideal selves can be distinguished.

However, one needs to bear in mind that they are abstractions.

(1) The schizoid personality. The ideal of this person consists in never needing to be close or dependent. The principle is distance. His/her concept is to look at facts and use reason. This person interrupts experience as soon as he/she feels, gets involved, or gets close. He/she usually grew up in an inhuman environment and

²⁵Horney, p. 19.

²⁶Fritz Riemann, Grundformen der Angst, eine tiefenpsychologische Studie (München: Ullstein, 1969), p. 15.

distrustful of other persons. Therefore, he/she prefers "objective" sciences and can become outstanding in abstract thinking. Religiously, such persons are rationalists and skeptics. They can argue sharply about the senselessness of beliefs. If they hold beliefs, they tend toward theological abstraction and ridicule emotions.

(2) The depressive personality. The ideal of these persons consists in never being distant or angry. Their principle is closeness. The concept is to sacrifice oneself for the other and to "eat" the other person up. They interrupt experiencing as soon as they begin to get angry, become distant, or dominating. As a child they were either smothered with love or dominated. So they never did grow up and leave the child-like state of dependency. These persons will prefer professions in which they can serve others, as nurse, social-worker, teacher, minister, etc. Religiously, they tend to misunderstand the commandment to love one's neighbor "more than oneself." They experience faith as the demand to be better, more virtuous, more altruistic, and to sacrifice oneself.

(3) The compulsive personality. The ideal of these persons consists in having their surroundings always ordered and stable. Their principle is order. The concept is to leave everything unchanged, keep it well ordered and secured. They interrupt experience as soon as they become aware of something novel, disturbing or unsettling. The

attitude is rigid, strict, intolerant and opinionated. They are interested in how something is "supposed" to be done, or "ought" to be. Religiously they orient themselves toward ritual, dogma, laws, and principles. They value blind faith and obedience, the institution, and ethical purity.

(4) The hysterical personality. The ideal of these persons consists in having their surroundings always novel, unpredictable and exciting. The principle is change. Their concept is to avoid anything which could limit or commit them. They interrupt experience as soon as they encounter demand, responsibilities or consequences. "It won't be so bad," is their sentence. They usually are indebted, not on time, and unreliable. They pass through a number of occupations, marriages, and enterprises. Religion is there to be used and abused like all other things and persons. They like the unconventional element in religion and emphasize the notion of protest.

Each of the ideal selves develops out of one of the four functions, as Carl Gustav Jung calls these basic tendencies of consciousness.²⁷ The basic anxiety is alleviated by a split in consciousness. Certain functions are considered evil and, therefore, avoided. Diagram 5 illustrates this.

²⁷Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C. G. Jung (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 10-18; Frieda Fordham, An Introduction to Jung's Psychology (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973), pp. 29-46.

The diagram shows how each basic function of the psyche is blown up to an ideal self. The true self with its conflicting tendencies and functions is despised. Thus, conflict, uncertainty, but also openness and flexibility are avoided. Henceforth, the person is concerned to realize the ideal self, to be something he/she is not. Like Bonhoeffer's "religious person," the person tries to consider him/herself especially favored due to this ideal behavior. He/she does indeed judge good and evil and tries to realize the "good."

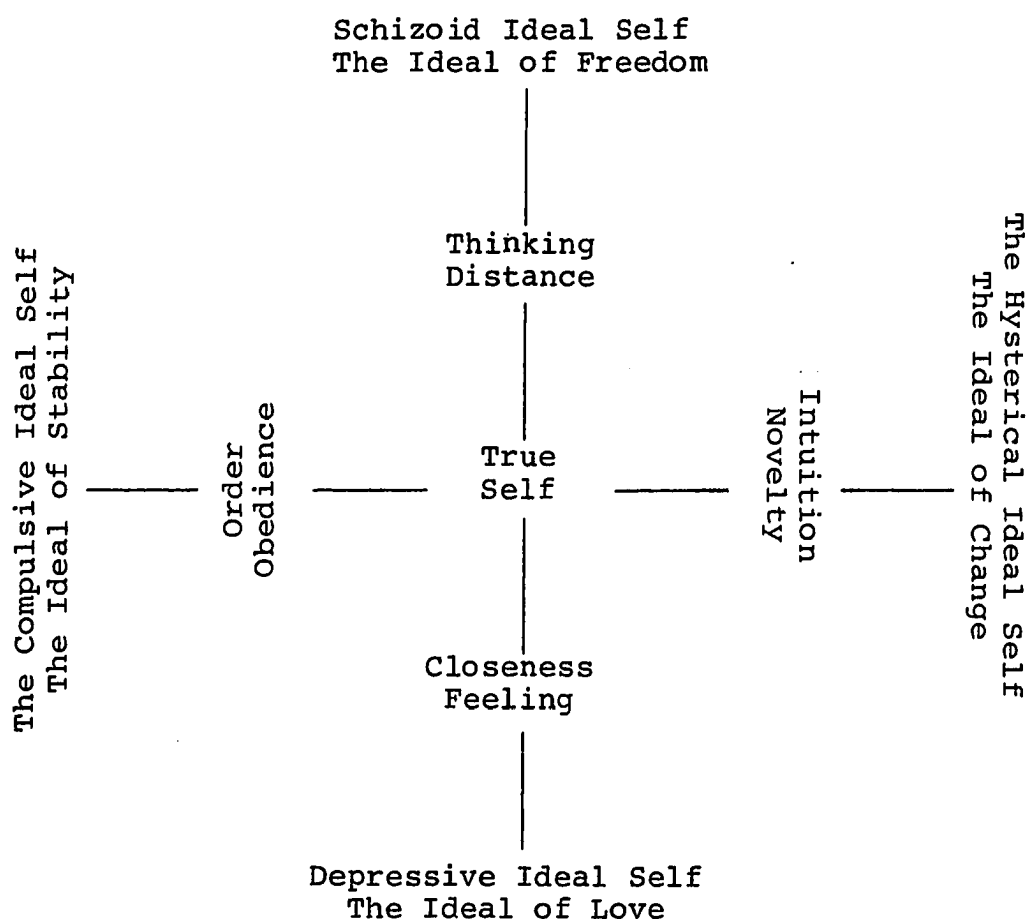


Diagram 5

Latner, a psychotherapist, refers to Genesis 2.

The fall of Adam and Eve came when they learned to interrupt the free-functioning process of their living to make abstractions. So they covered their spontaneous sexuality with fig-leaf aprons, symbolizing the superimposition of the concept that nakedness is evil and shameful over their natural being.

Their sin was not only in disobeying God by eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Though their disobedience is a factor in what happened, our fall originates from more than feeling guilty because we have not been good children. The sin of Adam and Eve was in eating that particular fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The fruit gave them the ability to know abstract concepts apart from the realization in the world and to live their lives (as they promptly began to do) deliberately, based on principles. So, by the fruit of that tree they became as we are, divorced from the union of awareness and expression, the synaptic experience of spontaneous and integrated behavior.²⁸

LETTING GO

In Theology

Christ. Within the sphere of Adam, Christ dies on the cross as the free one in full obedience to God. In I Cor. 1:18-3:20, Paul places this word in sharp contrast to the "wisdom of this world."

This attitude is confronted with the attitude of Christ, who chose not to prescribe to God the way he wanted to live, but who let go of all controlling and allowed God to lead him. This Christ, so willing to let go, is indeed a scandal to the person who strives for security and a god-like ideal image.

²⁸Latner, pp. 94-95.

For Paul, Christ is the beginning and the symbol of faith. "Faith" is trust in God "who resurrects the dead and calls the not being into being."²⁹ Abraham is an example of this faith. He leaves the familiar surroundings and is willing to let go of what he owns. He trusts God to lead him in the right way. But Christ is more than Abraham. Christ is the fulfillment of faith. Jesus became the Christ because he did not merely leave his homeland to go into another land. Christ left everything to go into nothing.

Since Christ, faith includes the risk of letting go with the totality of one's existence. Paul uses the word "body" (soma) for this totality. However, body had for Paul a different connotation than for us. Käsemann explains:

Body is the nature of man in its necessary participation in the created, and in its ability to communicate in the widest sense. It is its relatedness to a given world at any time. What we are, we are by participation and belonging.³⁰

Faith is an act of the whole person, of body, soul, and mind, and determines a basic attitude and a relatedness. The alternative is: being related to Adam (Rom. 5:20) or being related to Christ. "Not I live any longer, but Christ lives within me."³¹ Faith is surrender to

²⁹Romans 4:17.

³⁰Ernst Käsemann, "Zur paulinischen Anthropologie," in his Paulinisch Perspektiven (Tübingen: Mohr, 1969), p.43.

³¹Galatians 2:20.

incorporation into Christ.

I have shown in Chapter II that incorporation into Christ was misunderstood as a removal from history and reality.³² This looks, superficially, like surrender to nothingness. In a deeper sense, this is another form of a "theology of glory." To give up one's attempts to hold on to life, and to let go, means to trust again in God as the creator and giver of life. The word of the cross repeats the word of creation in a new form (I Cor. 2:18; cf. Rom. 4:17; and II Cor. 2:6).

The cross shows that the true God is always the one who acts on nothingness. Who saves creation from chaos and shows himself as the raiser from the dead since the beginning of the world.³³

A theology of the cross. Theology in the perspective of the cross is a paradoxical theology.

The visible and hidden parts of God are the opposite of those which are invisible. They are God's humanity, weakness, and foolishness. . . . For because men abused their knowledge of God which they had gained from the works, God determined on the contrary to be known from sufferings. . . . From now on it could never be enough for a man, nor could it benefit him to know God in his glory and majesty unless he knows him at the same time in the humility and shame of the cross. In this way he destroys the wisdom of the wise and brings to nought the understanding of the prudent. As Isaiah says, "Verily thou art a hidden God." (Isa. 45:15)³⁴

³²See above, pp. 40-41.

³³Ernst Käsemann, "Die Heilsbedeutung des Todes Jesu bei Paulus," in his Paulinische Perspektiven, p. 74.

³⁴Luther, p. 290. (Translation corrected by the author.)

The cross shows us to find the revelation of God in his hiddenness, life in surrender, and wisdom in the loss of "knowledge." And this is not to be misunderstood as if the Christian life were made up of smallness, passivity, and ignorance. Not at all. Were we to boast with these qualities as virtues, we would, again, hold on to "works," and try to make something of ourselves. The theology of the cross implies a turnaround in the basic attitude. It is the invitation to let go of all attempts to manipulate God, self and neighbor.

(1) The theology of the cross implies, first, the surrender of all preconceived knowledge about what God should be like. "Therefore, in Christ crucified is the true knowledge of God."³⁵ Walter Link has dealt with this aspect of the cross in a splendid dissertation titled: "Luther's Struggle for the Freedom of Theology from Philosophy."³⁶ Most theologies start with philosophical assumptions about the nature of God. These are logical a priori statements based on reason. Principles of an abstract nature, however, are a sign of Adam and not of the living God. One example is Thomism.

(a) The philosophical help in Thomism. Thomas uses

³⁵Martin Luther, Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Boehlhaus, 1883-1978), I, 362.

³⁶For this and the following: Walter Link, Das Ringen Luthers um die Freiheit der Theologie von der Philosophie (München: Kaiser, 1955), pp. 166-210.

the natural philosophy of Aristotle to construct his systematic reflection of Christian theology. In order to think together God's omnipotence and the relative independence of natural occurrences, Thomas uses the concept of "first cause" (*prima causa*), which is present in all "secondary causes" (*causae secundae*), and which is "final goal" (*ultimus finis*) of all events. Only the "first cause" is absolutely free. The "secondary causes" are dependent and "caused causes" (*causae causatae*). This Aristotelian philosophical thought is combined with Platonic ideas about the "goodness" (*bonitas*) of God. Since God alone is good, the "secondary causes" must reflect this goodness which enables them to move toward the final goal.

Neither as "first cause" nor as "final goal" God is active in the present moment. The current causing is done by the "secondary causes." Through the "secondary causes" the "first cause" works everything alone, and solely through the "secondary causes" the "first cause" is at work.

Since persons count among the "secondary causes," God and people cooperate in the process of salvation. Since this is so, we must have some kind of natural "disposition" (*dispositio*) for grace. So we can cooperate through our own merits (*meritum de congruo*). God and persons are somehow opposed and also somehow cooperating partners.

They move toward each other. Between them is a relationship of mutual movement in the form of "order" (*ordo*).

As judge, God is bound to his own laws and gives back to each according to the contribution in the "order" (reddere cuique quod suum est). His giving is not free gift, but return.

(b) Luther's criticism. The main criticism of Luther is that Thomas' construction makes obsolete Christ as God's free, merciful coming. The "condition" makes all trust in Christ impossible. Where there is "condition," there God's action is conditionally bound. Where we need to meet conditions, we need to hold on to some self-concept.

Against Thomas, Luther stresses the thought of God as "creator out of nothing." He rejects firmly any thought of cooperation. Cooperation is not full letting go.

The result is that the ontological relation between God and man, the thought of the participation of man in divine being, which form the foundation of all this language about the evident and obvious reality of man, all these lead to false statements in theology. They all have one focus: the total and singular dimension of the reality of God and his merciful action on man is not understood.³⁷

To let go of preconceived and human thoughts about God and to begin listening to God as he makes himself known to persons in the message of the cross is a deeply unsettling experience.

Bonhoeffer expressed this turn in one's thoughts about God in a little poem:

³⁷Ibid., p. 210.

Christians and Pagans

Men go to God when they are sore bestead
 Pray to him for succour, for his peace, for bread,
 For mercy for them sick, sinning, or dead;
 All men do so, Christian and unbelieving.

Men go to God when he is sore bestead,
 Find him poor and scorned, without shelter and bread,
 Whelmed under weight of the wicked, the weak, the dead;
 Christians stand by God in his hour of grieving.

God goes to every man when sore bestead,
 Feeds body and spirit with his bread;
 For Christians, pagans alike he hangs dead,
 And both alike forgiving.³⁸

We need to let go of our ideas of God which is a God created after our own images. Also implied is a letting go of a God who is the guarantee of my own wishes and illusions. At this point there is a close affinity between Christianity and Zen Buddhism. The latter's intent is to lead the follower through the practice of sitting still and the contemplation of koans. Yet, the goal of this way is the realization that all preconceived ideas and thoughts about the nature of God and self are illusion and extensions of distorted assumptions. The mind runs against the koan like an iron wall until in an instant the illusion is comprehended and the self breaks open to the reality of the All.

Passing thoughts are relatively harmless. But ideologies, dogmatic assumptions, opinions and principles throw those shadows which darken the light of the truth, not to mention all that factual knowledge which we have gathered from birth and which we try to hold on to.

As long as the winds of thought continue to disturb

³⁸ Bonhoeffer, Letters, pp. 348-349.

the waters of our true nature, our self-being, we cannot distinguish truth from falseness. Therefore it is very important to calm those winds. As soon as they cease the waves will calm down, the disturbed waters will clear, and we will recognize directly that the moon of the truth has never ceased shining. The moment of such recognition is Kensho, i.e., enlightenment, the cognition of the true substance of our self.³⁹

The difference between Christ and Zen is that the latter leads people to their own timeless essence, while Christ leads them into the midst of history, the here and now moment of God's presence for them.

(2) The theology of the cross implies the surrender of preconceived ideas about what people should be like. At the cross persons recognize the futility of all attempts to be better and more righteous before God. Both insight, morality, and piety, which we consider good, and ignorance, immorality, and godlessness, which we consider evil, are revealed as attempts of holding on to one's own continuity before God.

In everything he strives for and does, he strives more for his own happiness, will, and honor, rather than God's and neighbor's. Therefore all his works, all his words, all his thoughts, and all his life are bad and not divine.⁴⁰

It is deeply upsetting and humiliating to realize that even those traits of which one is so proud are part of a more or less concealed ideal image which one uses to ward off the underlying distrust and fear of God. "See, the judgement

³⁹Phillip Kapleau, Die drei Pfeiler des Zen (München: Barth, 1975), pp. 60-61. (My translation).

⁴⁰Luther, Werke, IV, 244.

of God is so different from the judgement of men, he condemns that which men choose, and he chooses that which men condemn."⁴¹

The view from below. In taking account of the development of the church in recent times, Bonhoeffer discovered a steady decline of the relevance of Christian tradition, language, and thought. He is convinced that this phenomenon is a chance for the church rather than a loss. The church will now be led back to its center, the cross. It will participate in the experience of nothingness which is so vital to the message of Christ. It will be thrown into the place of the poor servant who has to live by God's gifts alone. Therefore, people who try to defend religion against its scorers don't "go far enough."⁴² This sentence would be utterly ridiculous without an understanding of the cross.

The cross brings about a change of direction. It directs one's attention toward the painful, immoral, irreligious aspects of one's life. God himself has chosen this change of direction. He lets himself be pushed out of the world on to the cross. "He is weak and powerless in the world, and that is precisely the way, the only way, in which

⁴¹Ibid., III, 463.

⁴²Bonhoeffer, Letters, P. 285.

he is with us and helps us."⁴³ If one accepts this change of direction one finds oneself led into participation in worldly reality.

This new direction leads man into the dark aspects of the world and his own existence. Bonhoeffer writes:

There remains an experience of incomparable value. We have for once learnt to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcast, the suspect, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed, the reviled--in short, from the perspective of those who suffer. The important thing is that neither bitterness nor envy gnawed at the heart during this time, that we came to look with new eyes at matters great and small, sorrow and joy, strength and weakness, that our perception of generosity, humanity, justice and mercy became clearer, freer, less corruptible. We have to learn that personal suffering is a more effective key, a more rewarding principle for exploring the world in thought and action than personal good fortune. This perspective from below must not become the partisan possession of those who are eternally dissatisfied; rather we must do justice to life in all its dimensions from a higher satisfaction, whose foundation is beyond any talk "from below" or "from above." This is the way in which we affirm it.⁴⁴

This should not be confused with a depressive pessimism which finds the bad aspect in everything good, or with a masochistic search for punishment and humiliation. The cross invites people to look at reality realistically--to look at what is. To participate in life "from below" means to surrender all safeguarding from real life and to become fully human. It means to give up all knowledge and all principles which are conceived before the encounter with Christ's and one's own cross.

⁴³Ibid., p. 360.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 17.

I discovered later, and I'm still discovering right up to this moment, that it is only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith. One must completely abandon all attempts to make something of oneself, whether it be a saint, or a converted sinner, or a churchman (a so-called priestly type!), a righteous man or an unrighteous one, a sick man or a healthy one. By this-worldliness I mean living unservedly in life's duties, problems, successes and failures, experiences and perplexities. In so doing we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God, taking seriously, not our own sufferings, but those of God in the world--watching with Christ in Gethsemane. That I think is faith; that is metanoia; and that is how one becomes a man and a Christian (cf. Jer. 45!). How can success make us arrogant or failure lead us astray, when we share in God's sufferings through a life of this kind?"⁴⁵

I am aware that it is difficult to write about this aspect of the cross. This is due to the matter at stake. To write about letting go is possible only in a negative way: What not to hang on to any longer; images, virtues, knowledge, or boasting. The arrival point, namely nothingness or emptiness, resists strictly being objectified. Only life itself, which is taken in its totality as gift from the creator, renders this experience.

Faith and surrender. In Christ, God loved the real world, as it is, including its constructive and destructive aspects. Unlike us, God does not place a condition on the world and others.

Faith which undergoes the transformation by the cross follows God on his way to real man. It is the

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 370.

surrender of all "shoulds," ideal images, and pretensions, and a view and encounter with one's own self and others, and the world as they truly are. This is where God will meet us. Not in the storm of achievements, not in the wind of silent or noisy virtues, but in the whispering and scary breeze of the true self will God permit man a glimpse from behind.

Therefore, paradoxically, the person formed by the cross is the person who does not "know" him/herself. He/she risks this self in the trust that God will know the depth of his/her heart.

In Psychotherapy

Experiencing. The patient is asked to report anything which comes to attention in psychoanalytic oriented therapy. Thoughts, images, words, or memories are the grist for the analytic work. The request to avoid evaluating and censoring that which is perceived is very important.⁴⁶

More recent psychotherapies, like Gestalt therapy, specify this request by asking the person to be aware of the totality of his/her experience. The assumption behind this request is that awareness per se is curative. "The incredible thing which is so difficult to understand is that

⁴⁶Sigmund Freud, Therapy and Technique (New York: Collier, 1963), p. 147.

experience, awareness of the now, is sufficient to solve all difficulties of this nature, that is neurotic difficulties."⁴⁷ Awareness in the now unfailingly brings a person in contact with his true self and triggers, thereby, pain. Our natural reaction to pain is avoidance. If we avoid the pain, we hang on to our ideal selves, the status quo, and we prevent ourselves from growing.

Client N I talked of earlier became aware that he was leaving the "now" by turning to the past and telling me a story of an incident which happened a few hours before. His boss had told him that he considered him too slow and too dependent on the opinion of others. The short question: "What are you doing, now?" brought him back to his "now." He hesitated, paused, and responded that he was talking about his boss. Talking about something, however, is a way of avoiding the full experience. I asked him to talk directly to his boss, and then be the boss and respond. A dialogue developed with much smiling and apologizing from my client. As he was talking, his left hand was pulling vigorously at his right hand. This caught my awareness and I directed his attention to his hands. He stopped his hand movement immediately. I asked him to continue with his hand movement, even to exaggerate it, and if possible, give his hands a voice and to let them talk to each other. In

⁴⁷Perls, "Four Lectures," p. 26.

the process, which now followed, and which took considerable time, the client felt unable to exaggerate this movement. His arms felt paralyzed. His shoulders and neck were aching. Asked how he produced this pain, he got in touch with squeezing himself. I asked him to exaggerate the squeezing, but he felt unable to go on. He suddenly felt so tired that he nearly fell asleep. I asked what he had learned after the session. He realized that his squeezing and his sleepiness helped him to avoid something, but he did not know what it was. He felt confused, tired, and vaguely afraid, as if some impending disaster was about to strike him.

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to deal in depth with therapeutic techniques.⁴⁸ The point of importance to my argument is that Gestalt therapy and similar experiential counseling techniques aim at fully involving the client in his/her ongoing experience. This is quite surprising to the client. He/she will object. He/she is looking for something which is going to make him/her feel happy and zestful again. Why should one delve back into one's grief? So often the counselor hears the words: "But I have cried enough; I know this is not going to help me." What this client is doing at this very moment is distancing him/herself from his/her tears. This might be very

⁴⁸See especially Fagan and Shephard, pp. 81-238.

necessary right now. The counselor who will stay with the client in the awareness continuum will also accompany him/her at those places where he/she is stuck, distrustful, or simply not yet ready.

The "shadow." I choose Carl Jung's term "shadow" to describe the opposite of what I called above the "ideal self." I find this term more comprehensive than Perl's term "underdog" which describes roughly the same thing. The "shadow" contains all those qualities and attitudes which contradict the ideal self but which are nevertheless part of the true self of a person.

Since the person will not let the "shadow" into awareness, the psyche has to use a trick to get rid of these undesired needs and attitudes. The psyche projects the conflict outside itself. One cannot stand this person because he/she brags so much. What one cannot stand is one's own desire to brag.

It is important to see that probably no two "shadows" are exactly alike. Each person has his/her own unique "shadow." Nevertheless, a distinction of certain basic "shadow" patterns is possible.

(1) The schizoid "shadow." The "shadow" of the schizoid person contains closeness, dependency and weakness. Breathing muscles and face muscles are frozen. It is possible that the "shadow" is lived secretly through an "affair" or delegated to the spouse.

(2) The depressive "shadow." For the depressive it is terrible to be angry and unloving. Yet the "shadow" harbors, to a great degree, these feelings. The aggression and concealed backstabbing which occurs in some churches by people who consider themselves sweet and loving is one instance where the shadow will break through and direct the actions of a person.

(3) The compulsive "shadow." It consists of the needs for irresponsibility, unpunctuality, and sloppiness. The compulsive person is usually constantly at war with the "shadow" out there: the hippie, those on welfare, etc. Yet sometimes the "shadow" will break through. A very proper and orderly person might find himself strangely attracted to the sleazy part of town.

(4) The hysterical "shadow." This shadow is made up of the needs for order, conformity, and responsibility. Among themselves, the artists, hippies, etc. are often extremely loyal, responsible, and caring.

This shows that the "shadow" must not necessarily contain traits which are commonly considered "negative." It is also possible that a person who has a "negative" "ideal image" has a "positive" "shadow." Either way, involvement in ongoing experience will bring the person to an encounter with the "shadow." This is unpleasant and painful. All guideposts and principles are being pushed over. The person loses his/her "knowledge" of good and

evil. All values turn upside down. And yet there seems no growth possible without this destruction of rigidly held images.

Some people stop the process and prefer to blame the other person. Others, like the client I mentioned above, will dive into their dark side, get scared, and interrupt. Then they will continue and continue, until an integration is reached, a sense of wholeness established. Nevertheless, this process is difficult and long, and remains a life-long task.

A friend of mine, a nurse with a very gentle, kind, and loving personality, who is also quite creative and spontaneous, occasionally gets depressed and is often unable to get order into her daily affairs. Her "ideal self" is somewhat of a mixture between depressive and hysterical. This woman recently had a dream in which she saw herself being persecuted by guerilla-like soldiers with unmovable faces. These soldiers had long knives on their guns and were killing innocent passers-by. When she worked with this dream in a Gestalt way, playing the different parts of the dream, she got very upset while playing the soldiers. She became aware that she had feelings which did not fit at all into her idea of herself. Her dream was a message of her true self offering her a missing and avoided part of herself for growth and integration. Diagram 6 shows the shadow-self constellation of this woman.

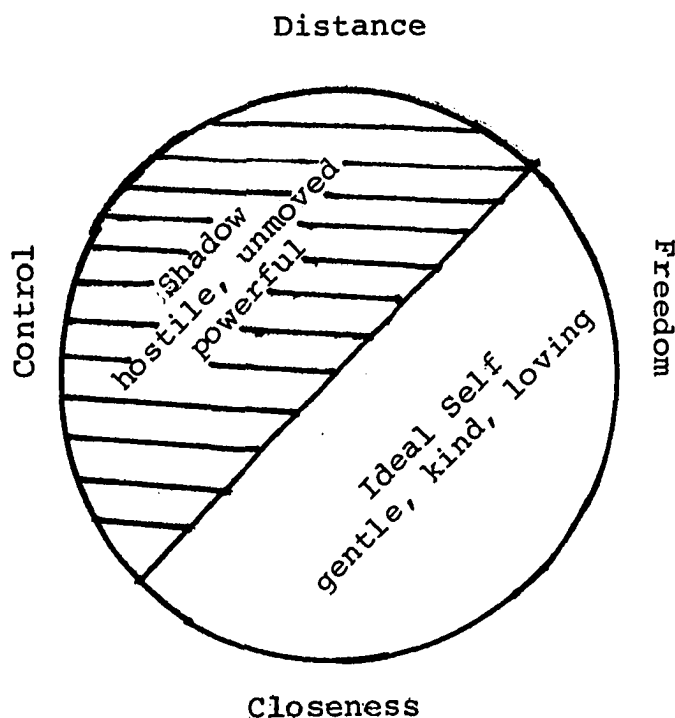


Diagram 6

I see a direct connection between this integration of the shadow and change of thinking (Greek: meta-noia = conversion) which occurs in an encounter with the cross. Here and there we are asked to let go of our principles of "good" and "evil" so that our eyes may be opened to the reality of ourselves and God. This seems to be at the root of growth. Jung expresses it so:

If you imagine someone who is brave enough to withdraw all these projections, then you get an individual who is conscious of a considerable shadow. Such a man saddled himself with new problems and conflicts. He has become a serious problem to himself, as he is now unable to say that they do this or that, they are wrong, and they must be fought against. . . . Such a man knows that whatever is wrong in the world is within himself, and if he only learns to deal with his own shadow he has done something real for the world. He has

succeeded in shouldering at least an infinitesimal part of the gigantic, unsolved social problems of our day.⁴⁹

The impasse. Once we leave the first layer of our existence which was called the "game layer,"⁵⁰ we begin to suffer ourselves. We begin to honestly face our "shadow" and struggle with it. We move to the second existential layer, "the phobic layer, the resistance, the objection to being what we are."⁵¹ In the case of my client N this objection came in the form of a vague, but powerful feeling of impending disaster and of sleepiness.

In time the client gets ready to move beyond the second layer.

If we get behind the phobic layer, the objections we find at that moment, the impasse occurs. And within the impasse there is the feeling of being not alive, of deadness. We feel that we are nothing, we are things. In every bit of therapy we have to go through this implosive layer in order to get to the authentic self. This is where most schools of therapy and therapists shrink away, because they also fear deadness. Of course it is not being dead but the fear and feeling of being dead, of disappearing.⁵²

The client dives into the impasse. Perls used the "blue baby" as the classic example for the impasse. The umbilical cord has been tied and no oxygen is coming forth from

⁴⁹Carl Gustav Jung, Psychology and Religion, West and East (New York: Pantheon, 1958), p. 84.

⁵⁰See above, p. 142.

⁵¹Perls, "Four Lectures," p. 22.

⁵²Ibid.

the mother's system. Yet, the child has not started to breathe. So momentarily it is stuck between getting his breath from the mother and between breathing with his own lungs. The baby turns blue; the doctor can give him a few inviting slaps, but he/she has to trust in and rely on the child's own organism.

The client, in the process of change, is in a similar situation. He/she did receive support and hold from the "ideal self," the avoidance of the "shadow," and the manipulation of the environment. Because he/she lets go of this hold, he/she lets go of the support received from it. New behavior and support from "true self" does not come forth at this moment.

From this point the client more or less quickly moves into the fourth layer, the implosive layer. It is comparable with the image of two wrestlers who are deadlocked in the struggle to pull each other to the ground. The "true self" pulls the person into one direction; the "ideal self" pulls the person into the opposite direction. Here the client will sometimes report that he/she feels dead. He/she will cease to breathe visibly and be under great strain.

Client N, I have been reporting on, reached this point in the session after his great sleepiness. Again he reported an incident which he perceived as painful, and again I directed his attention to his own processes. Soon

he felt the squeezing which he did to his neck, shoulders, and upper back. This time I decided to help him by suggesting he do to a pillow what he does to his own back. He was able to apply some pressure to the pillow, but when asked to exaggerate this, he paused and then interrupted. His face had a look of panic and he felt like choking. He reported being afraid and totally confused. He looked around the room so as to orient himself and find a firm hold in his environment. It was as if he had faced a great empty space, a hole, or a nothingness in his life.

The experience of nothingness is equally important in Gestalt therapy and in a theology of the cross.

The whole philosophy of nothingness is very fascinating. In our culture "nothingness" has a different meaning than it has in the Eastern religions. When we say "nothingness," there is a void, an emptiness, something deathlike. When the Eastern person says "nothingness," he calls it no thingness--there are no things there. There is only process happening. Nothingness doesn't exist for us, in the strictest sense, because nothingness is based on awareness of nothingness, so there is the awareness of nothingness, so there is something there. We find when we accept and enter this nothingness, the void, then the desert starts to bloom. The empty void becomes alive, is being filled.⁵³

As I have shown above, nothingness is a crucial aspect of the theology of the cross. The experience of nothingness seems to be a decisive factor in the Christian conversion experience in the perspective of the cross. It plays a prominent role in the Gestalt therapeutic way of personal

⁵³Perls, Gestalt Therapy Verbatim, p. 57.

change and growth. The experience of nothingness and growth seem to be two sides of the same coin.

BEING TRANSFORMED

In Theology

The Spirit. The believer who releases all security systems and allows God the creator to take charge of his life is guided by that power which Jesus promised his disciples. The Spirit is the gift and promise of participation within the freedom of God.⁵⁴

This freedom is event and gift, a creating reality which works through the life of the believers. It is in strong contrast to stoic ideals of freedom, which are rather timeless principles and human possibilities. Paul understands "Spirit" as an autonomous, creative, powerful force within the believer. It creates a new identity, which is directly opposed to the identity of the "flesh."⁵⁵

The Spirit is the manifestation and presence of God who has proven himself the creator of nothing.⁵⁶ This Spirit is so powerful and alive within that it prays and shows the way even when we do not know what to pray. Paul's time had no difficulties with exposure to ecstatic,

⁵⁴Rom. 8:33-34; Gal. 1:4; 5:1-13.

⁵⁵Rom. 8:4-9.

⁵⁶Rom. 8:11.

spiritual phenomena. It was obvious that spirit, speaking in tongues, and miraculous healings, occurred. What was new in Paul's understanding of the Spirit was the fact that the Spirit as gift of the creator leads persons back into creation, into life, and not away from it. The believer who surrendered his hold on life receives this same life back but with a new trust in God, with a new harmony, and with a lot less anxiety. Paul describes his own life as an example for a life in the Spirit:

Always troubled, but not anxious,
 at a loss, but not totally defeated
 persecuted, but not deserted,
 suppressed, but not lost.
 Always we carry with us on our bodies the
 death of Christ,
 so that also the life of Christ will be
 revealed on our body.⁵⁷

Because he/she feels blessed, he/she can become humble; because he/she knows that he/she has been taken seriously and loved by the living God, he/she can radiate love and gentleness. Because the spirit has gifted him/her with the most unique, individual charisma imaginable, he/she is able to show this talent in the service of others.⁵⁸ The Spirit works in a paradoxical way. It will render persons willing to follow their own talents and possibilities in a fearless fashion. At the same time they can be loving, caring and serving persons, who like and need others. These two

⁵⁷II Cor. 4:8-12.

⁵⁸I Cor. 14:12.

paradoxical characteristics are so typical of the work of the Spirit, according to Paul, that they can be used as criteria for evaluating the presence of the Spirit.⁵⁹

Ernst Käsemann aptly expresses this so:

Again and again the apostle passes on this watchword: "Each, as the Lord has given to him, each, as he was called." In salvation everything stays differentiated like in creation, because otherwise there would not be mutual care possible. God does not want molds. He provokes the individual even in natural, political, and spiritual groupings not to be merely programmed or follow the flock. To resist uniformity, to discover and nurture the talent given to him, to think of himself not as unfit because of his mistakes or weaknesses, but to be in his place a raised sign for the victory of Christ.⁶⁰

Nos extras nos. God's gift meets persons from outside. It surprises them when they expect it least. Yet, God's Spirit works through the faculties of people, and even though they do not possess and own God, God comes to them and dwells in them.

Luther uses the formula: "we outside ourselves" (nos extra nos).⁶¹ God's compassion meets us so that we receive ourselves from outside of ourselves in each given moment. We receive something which we do not expect. It is our self, cleansed, reconciled, and changed by God. It is

⁵⁹See Paul's debate about the value of speaking in tongues: I Cor. 12-14.

⁶⁰Käsemann, "Zur paulinischen Anthropologie," p. 14. (My translation).

⁶¹Karl-Heinz Zur Mühlen, Nos extra Nos, Luthers Theologie zwischen Mystik und Scholastik, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1972).

our self, yet a self that no longer distrusts, but trusts, no longer rebels, but obeys, no longer wants to possess, but receives gratefully. It is our self which is no longer our self, but God's self. Zur Mühlen published his dissertation on this subject. He writes:

(God's justice) works within us, without becoming our property. Upon this externity of its effectiveness depends its truth against the untruth of sin, its certainty against the uncertainty of the power of sin, which throws man into despair. Because sin wants to make man autonomous before God due to his own works, it renders him to despair. . . . Luther's *extra nos* aims not just at a modification of man's inwardness, but at the affirmation of his inwardness as externity, as a being outside of himself.⁶²

The paradox is: one does not know his own self at this moment. One has lost all distance to it and receives oneself out of God's hands. One is rather surprised by it, even shocked, following one's own self as Moses followed the cloud. Luther explains in a famous passage:

Faith, however, is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God, John 1. It kills the old Adam and makes us all together different men, in heart and spirit and mind and powers; and it brings with it the holy Spirit. Oh, what it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly. It does not ask whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has already done them, and is constantly doing them.⁶³

This immediacy of experience stems directly out of the encounter with the cross, which breaks apart all

⁶²Ibid., p. 226. (My translation).

⁶³Luther, Werke, VII, 10. (My translation).

distancing and reflecting. The Spirit is like a process or an ever-present stream which takes the believer with it. In his Heidelberg disputation (1518) Luther states explicitly:

The truth of the matter is that whosoever has been brought to nought by sufferings does not thereby do good works. On the contrary, he simply knows that God is working in him and effecting everything. Therefore, whether he is doing good works or whether he is not doing good works is all the same to him: he neither boasts if he does a good work, nor is he ashamed when God is not working anything in him. Thus he knows that it is enough if he suffers and is broken through the cross, nay rather is utterly brought to nought. . . . If we are to be born again we must first die and be exalted with the Son of Man. I said "Die," and this means to find death ever-present in all experiences.⁶⁴

Over and over again the attitude of distrust dies, and the attitude of trust and surrender grows. Luther⁶⁵ uses the example of a man who is in love with his wife. Nobody has to teach him how to act or be. He spontaneously expresses his love and caring. He need not think: "what should I do; what suppress." Since he truly trusts his wife and loves her, his trust teaches him all he needs to know. And he does the difficult things for her as lovingly as the easy things. But when he doubts, he begins to reflect and figure out what is the best thing to do. He begins to feel trapped and desperate. It is this trust, this immediacy of experience, which the Spirit opens to persons.

⁶⁴Luther, *Early Theological Works*, p. 295.

⁶⁵Luther, Werke, VI, 206-207. (My translation).

The image of God. Some of this might sound inhuman, even superhuman. Are we not always caught in ambiguities, uncertainties, and ambivalences? How are we to act immediately and spontaneously? This is true as long as we are concerned with making the best decision. In my opinion, it is inhuman to even assume that we are able to make the best decision--or next-to-best decision. It is the mind of Adam, our secret or open desire for mastery, which heaps us with uncertainties and ambivalences.

The environmental crises surrounding us today are a strong witness to the disasters which we can bring over ourselves and the rest of creation in the frantic search for pleasure and fun. Persons, as intended and created by God, are indeed caught in ambiguities and ambivalences. What is painful now can become the richest turning point and growing event in a person's life. A life, in the perspective of the cross, is the surrender to the basic unpredictability and mystery of life. It is not for us to "know." Yet, this same life is not merely resignation to the inevitable. It trusts and hopes in God's creating action and knows that God works exactly in the midst, and through that, which appears to our eyes as ambiguity and uncertainty. Human people trust that the truly important things are given to them by God, that God knows and that they will know too.

Bonhoeffer distinguishes between inhuman persons

which he calls "like God" (sicut deus) and human persons which he calls "image of God" (imago dei) in the following passage.

Imago dei - Godlike man in his existence for God and neighbor, in his primitive creatureliness and limitation; sicut deus - Godlike man in his out-of-himself knowledge of good and evil, in his limitlessness and his acting out-of-himself, in his underived existence, in his loneliness. Imago dei - that is, man bound to the word of the Creator and living from him; sicut deus - that is, man bound to the depths of his knowledge about God, in good and evil; imago dei - the creature living in the unity of obedience; sicut deus - the creator-man living out of the division of good and evil. Imago dei, sicut deus, agnus dei - the one who was sacrificed for man sicut deus, killing man's false divinity in the true divinity, the God Man who restores the image of God.⁶⁶

The event which demonstrates God's creating power is the resurrection of Christ. Resurrection and creation are two sides of the same coin.

By his resurrection we know of the creation--for if he were not resurrected the Creator would be lifeless and would not bear witness to himself. But by his creation we know once more of the power of his resurrection, because he remains the Lord.⁶⁷

True humanness is not a human possibility, or not something man can will and create actively. Humanness is God's gift. The archetype of a human person is Jesus, the Christ. In Christ, God recreated people. Therefore, Christian existence is "conformation with Christ."

Formation comes only by being drawn into the form of Jesus Christ. It comes only as formation in His

⁶⁶Bonhoeffer, Creation and Temptation, p. 71.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 17-18.

likeness, as conformation with the unique form of Him who was made man, was crucified and rose again.⁶⁸

But, Christ places persons into the midst of their own reality and of their situation. They find themselves in a concrete situation of experiences, responsibilities and necessities from which they cannot free themselves except by abstraction. Conformation to Christ happens in a full surrender to this situation.

Christ does not dispense with human reality for the sake of an idea which demands realization at the expense of the real. What Christ does is precisely to give Himself the real man and consequently the foundation of all human reality. And so formation in conformity with Christ has this double implication. The form of Christ remains one and the same, not as a general idea but in its own unique character as the incarnate, crucified, and risen God. And precisely for the sake of Christ's form the form of the real man is preserved, and in this way the real man receives the form of Christ.⁶⁹

Growth and the center of life. The paradoxical promise of the cross consists in opening up the center of life, the presence of the creating God at that moment when a person surrenders his/her hold on life. God meets him/her "outside of him/herself," invading his/her life with the strange, mystical presence of the Spirit.

The center of a person's life cannot be conceived abstractly. The lesson of the cross is involvement in life; this is the place where the Spirit will encounter the person.

⁶⁸Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 18.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 22-23.

Luther said this very clearly: "one becomes a theologian through living, even through dying, and through the experience of lostness, not through understanding, reading, or speculating."⁷⁰

The paradox of the cross is that a person begins to grow and to mature in that moment when he/she involves him/herself to such a deep degree in life. He/she grows at that moment when he/she feels most lost, confused, disoriented and overwhelmed by life's complexities.

In Psychotherapy

Exploding. The process in the psychotherapeutic relationship of the client with his/her true self has a similar structure as the process of the cross in the life of the believer. The energy and excitement which was locked in the impasse finally breaks through and explodes. By explosion I don't mean the destructive process we usually associate with someone going berserk. It is rather an astonishingly honest expression of the side and part of the self which has been avoided and denied for a long time.

Perls once compared the explosions in the growth process with those in a motor car.⁷¹ They are the force that give momentum to the process. The basic characteristic

⁷⁰Luther, Werke, V, 163. (My translation).

⁷¹Perls, Gestalt Therapy Verbatim, p. 56.

is that the person begins to express him/herself honestly. Usually, both the client and the counselor are taken by surprise, and it is as though a wall has suddenly collapsed. The energy set free in this experience is impressive and corresponds to the energy held back and accumulated.

There are basically four different kinds of explosions: (1) the explosion into joy; (2) the explosion into anger; (3) the explosion into orgasm; and (4) the explosion into grief. This process is hard to describe; one has to experience it and be able to observe it in order to appreciate its importance, freshness and uniqueness. In this moment the person appears absolutely authentic, entirely beyond good and evil, and very much present. The person who is privileged to accompany the client on this process has the feeling of blessing and elation afterwards. Clients themselves describe their feelings to that effect. Afterwards the person is unusually calm, relaxed and "fulfilled."

In order to give a better description of the matter of explosion, I want to return to client N. He was stuck in the impasse. He sat in a confused state, trying to orient himself in the room. I gave him some verbal reassurance about my being here, but did not help him interrupt the process. Rather, I asked him not to pay too much attention to his panic and to stay in touch with what was going on. I encouraged him to continue squeezing the pillow as

hard as he could. It took quite some time, but suddenly he started breathing heavier and applying pressure to the pillow. Again and again he squeezed the pillow, more and more authentically. Anger appeared in his face. I asked him to give the movements some words and he started yelling: "I don't want to. . . .," "I don't want to. . . ." He went on with this process for some time. Then he stopped, exhausted. He did not want to go on. His parting words were: "There is quite a lot more where this came from." He had made contact with a side within himself he had been completely unaware of. In the process of this rediscovery of his anger, he became more self conscious, less apologetic, less fearful. He had to fight with a great fear of being unacceptable, even becoming murderous. He began to work through many unfinished situations with his mother. She had become ill after his birth and stayed ill for most of his younger childhood. He had felt very angry towards her. When he was four, he had attacked her once and bitten, hit, and scratched her. Subsequently, she got sick and told him that he had nearly killed her. The recovery of this past was accompanied by several explosions into anger, and later into grief, then into joy. He finally was able to emotionally let go of his mother and his inner angry, sad child.

It is very important to note that this occurred at first against the resistance of the client's conscious self.

The client was very determined to hold on to his image. He wanted to continue pretending that he was a nice, sweet, innocent person, who is merely treated unjustly by the rest of humanity. He had felt greatly hurt, but also proud of his martyr-role. This arrogance and aloofness disappeared later as he faced the fact that he was just as angry as some of the people he knew. He had used up a lot of energy to hold on to his ideal image.

Perls states:

The main phobic attitude I can think of is being phobic about discovering life. In order to avoid living a life of discovering the world and ourselves, we often take the short-cut of getting information.⁷²

The result of the explosion is, paradoxically, responsibility. Responsibility, now, has a new meaning. It is no longer blind obedience, or unquestioning acceptance of an abstract principle. It is the ability to respond to a situation in a way which integrates the demands of the situation and the demands of one's own true self. Responsibility becomes response-ability. My client had followed a principle which said: anger is destructive. Therefore, he had been very responsible in his own eyes. However, he had failed to respond properly to his own needs as well as to the needs of people around him. The reconciliation with his "shadow" allowed him to respond more appropriately. Thus, he became more responsible.

⁷²Perls, "Four Lectures," p. 25.

The self. The most important result in working with a client is that he learns to trust a power within, and also beyond, which guides him/her in the process toward responsibility. This has a direct growth-oriented implication. The client learns to open up to that force which is at work within him/her. I call this force the self.

I do not use the term "self" as it is used in everyday speech. Rather, I see it as a power at work in each individual, forming the center of his totality which includes both conscious and unconscious aspects. It includes that which Perls calls the "wisdom of the organism."

This type of organismic self-regulation is very important in therapy, because the emergent, unfinished situations will come to the surface. We don't have to dig: It's all there. And you might look upon this like this: that from within, some figure emerges, comes to the surface, and then goes into the outside world, reaches out for what we want, and comes back, assimilates and receives. Something else comes out, and again the same process repeats itself.
 . . . This is the wisdom of the organism. The organism knows all. We know very little.⁷³

The "wisdom of the organism" can be demonstrated by a reflection on human skin. It knows very well how to respond, when it is injured. It starts a cleansing process which is a highly sophisticated chemical reaction. "We," i.e., our conscious minds, know very little about what is going on. So, our skin is in this sense an "over against"

⁷³Perls, Gestalt Therapy Verbatim, pp. 21-22.

(lat. extra nos). The human skin is, also, an excellent indicator of one's true inner feelings, more accurate, in fact, than one's conscious awareness as the findings of biofeedback research have demonstrated.

In my understanding, the self includes the "wisdom of the organism," yet far transcends it. Perls stayed stuck with a very mechanical under-standing of the self by reducing it to a purely organismic function comparable to a thermostat in a heating system. Eastern thought had a deeper concept of the self for a long time. There it is called Atman, Brahman, Tao, etc. It is a supreme transcendent entity which is the essence of a person and at the same time of the cosmos. My concept of the self includes the organismic and the cosmic aspects. I conceive of it in similarity to the traditional term of "soul." It is a very personal, individual power, which enables persons to relate in depth to themselves, others and God. I consider most valid C. G. Jung's understanding of the self.

It consists rather in the awareness on the one hand of our unique natures, and on the other of our intimate relationship with all life, not only human, but animals and plant, and even that of inorganic matter and the cosmos itself. It brings a feeling of "oneness," and of reconciliation with life, which can now be accepted as it is, not as it ought to be.

It is as if the guidance of life had passed over to an invisible center. . . (and there is a)release from compulsion and impossible responsibility that are the inevitable results of participation mystique.⁷⁴

⁷⁴Fordham, p. 63.

The self is the source and ultimate foundation of our psychic being. It is the active force behind the psychic activity and gives direction to it. There is no way of "proving" this self. The only way of verifying it is the multiple observation that there is a directedness toward health, wholeness, and spiritual growth underneath the many defensive layers and resistances of the human psyche. Rogers,⁷⁵ Assagioli,⁷⁶ and Maslow⁷⁷ are some of the witnesses for this directedness.

In my view, the self is an element "outside" of man, beyond our will, our consciousness, and beyond "sin." The self does not participate in our attempts to hold on and secure our existence. It is rather the silent voice which quietly, but incessantly, nags us into "letting go," into transformation. To become open for it we need to accept that which is wrong, inferior, irrational, and chaotic in our consciousness. This involves suffering and considerable struggle. It implies a becoming aware of the deep paradoxes within our existence. The self sends vital, existential messages, powerful emotions, strong images and intuitions, and vivid, colorful dreams to persons. It speaks a language

⁷⁵Rogers.

⁷⁶Roberto Assagioli, Psychosynthesis (New York: Viking Press, 1971), pp. 18-19.

⁷⁷Maslow, pp. 3-8.

all its own and needs to be wrestled with so that it reveals its secrets. It is receptive for all our conscious experience. The self is nurtured by a living faith, holy scriptures, liturgies, and rituals. James and Savary have named the self "the power within." They write:

We term this force the Power Within. Others may prefer to call the source of this inner power God, Spirit, Nature, Ground of Being, or some other name. Paul the apostle was referring to the Power Within when he asked, "Do you know that God's Spirit dwells in you?" To describe the Power Within, Jesus used the Water-of-Life symbol. "If anyone thirsts," he said, "let him come to me and drink. As Scripture says, from within him will flow rivers of living water."⁷⁸

Diagram 7 illustrates my understanding of the self which forms the inner core of a person's being. This core cuts through all three "parts" of a person, which in reality are one whole gestalt under different aspects: body, mind, and soul.⁷⁹ (In the diagram the three aspects of the personality are: Body, Ego, Unconscious. Sensing, Feeling, Thinking, and Intuiting are boundary functions. The self can be distinguished as "Wisdom of the Organism," "Personal Self," and "Mystical Self." It is, however, one whole formation.)

⁷⁸Muriel M. James, Louis M. Savary, The Power at the Bottom of the Well (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 20.

⁷⁹This concept of the self is quite similar to Assagioli's understanding of the self. His method of correlating insights from different psychological traditions into his system of Psychosynthesis has helped me to take a similar route. See Assagioli.

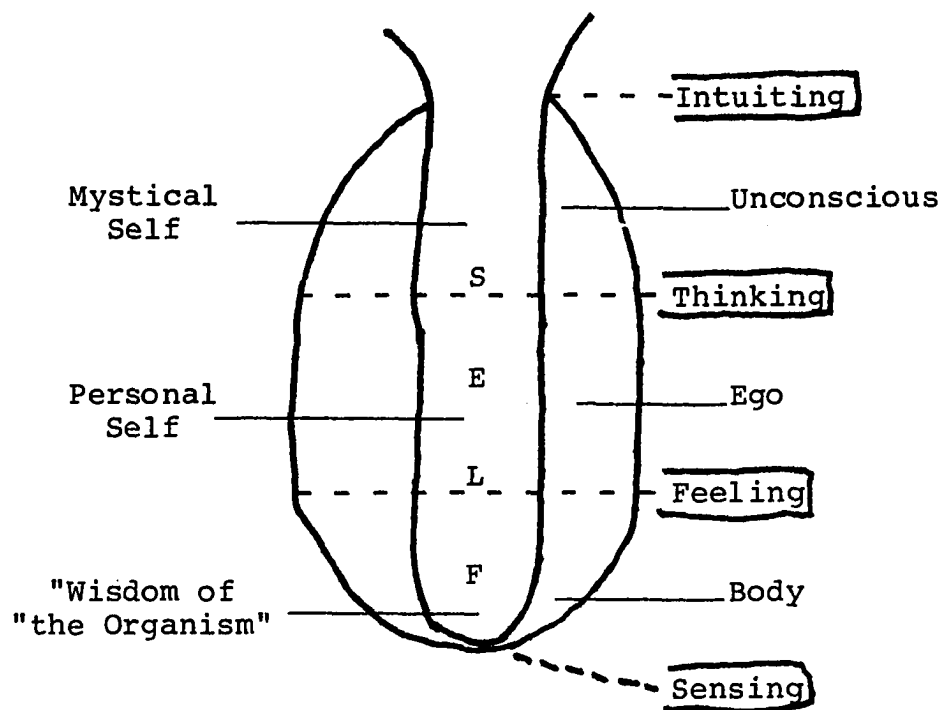


Diagram 7

THE PARADOX OF GROWTH

Arnold R. Beisser published a little paper with this title, "The Paradoxical Theory of Change." I consider it one of the most crucial papers on Gestalt therapy and on change as such. Beisser formulates his basic assumption this way:

I will call it the paradoxical theory of change, for reasons that shall become obvious. Briefly stated it is this: that change occurs when one becomes what he is, not when he tries to become what he is not. Change does not take place through a coercive attempt by the individual or by another person to change him, but it does take place if one takes the time and effort to be what he is--to be fully invested in his current positions. . . .

. . . (The Gestalt therapist) believes change does not take place by "trying," coercion, or persuasion, or by insight, interpretation, or any other such means. Rather, change can occur when the patient abandons, at

least for the moment, what he would like to become and attempts to be what he is.⁸⁰

In the previous sections of this chapter, I have elaborated this process. It is my conviction that the change brought to humanity by Christ and offered as a gift of God to persons by the church has always had this paradox as its central message.

I have attempted to show that the same basic structure is inherent in the change brought about by Christ and Gestalt therapy. This change follows three steps.

(1) By immersion into the human experience, Christ experiences the reality of sin to the fullest. By his willingness to be obedient, he suffers under those who are in rebellion.

By his willingness to be fully who he is, the client experiences deeply the way he avoids and manipulates his situation.

(2) By crucifying Christ, the rebels risk a last attempt of manipulating the reality of God. The cross is the witness that trying to avail oneself of God leads mankind into nothingness.

The client immerses himself fully into his/her resistance and does not receive support from them any longer. Honest support from his/herself does not come forth, yet.

⁸⁰Arnold R. Beisser, "The Paradoxical Theory of Change," in Fagan and Shephard, p. 77.

The client is stuck and has the feeling of nothingness.

(3) God himself creates out of the nothingness of the cross a new mankind. In the silence of the cross he does his new, lifegiving deed. It is the promise that the power of the resurrection shall be at work in those who are willing to die with Christ.

The client who has surrendered all manipulation is open for his/her true inner self. It comes to his/her assistance and graces him/her with that which he tried to reach so desperately on his/her own.

It is my conviction that both the cross and the change process in therapy point to a higher power which effects healing and change. It is the creative reality of God, who is the personal beyond within the here and now. Both the cross and Gestalt therapy invite persons to allow themselves to become transparent to this reality which is beyond. Pastoral counselors need to perceive the cross of Christ, which is the proclamation of the living God, as the key to the process of growth and change.

The pastoral counselor needs to point to the deeper, underlying reality which made itself known in the cross of Christ. It is paradox that the cross, though at the same time a most unique, once and for all event, is also the general, secularly verifiable basis for change. This is in my view not a contradiction but the proof of the matter at stake. The cross, the form of Christ is in a mysterious way also the form of all reality.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Chapter II developed Paul's theological use of the cross by placing his statements into their dialogical context. With the cross as theological concept, Paul proclaimed the power of the resurrection which opens the horizon of hope for faith. At the same time he confessed solidarity with all those who are suffering, despised and alienated. In his theology the cross has the dialectical function of affirming the reality of salvation and hope and the reality of the ongoing process of liberation.

Paul's theological concept was being related to a second tradition which perceived the cross as an ancient symbol. Both concepts were originally separate. In the course of church history, especially since Emperor Constantine, both traditions melted with each other. The symbolic content of the "bare" cross, which represented wholeness, preservation and fullness of life, was brought into direct connection with the story of the dying and resurrected Jesus from Nazareth. The cross became thus at once a central theological and symbolic element, which characterized significantly Christian theology and worship. This symbol points to the story of the dying and rising Christ. This story in turn points to God the creator, who fills the dead and empty space with light and life. The presentational

level of the cross shows the God in Christ who has drawn his cross onto reality as a sign of closure and new creation.

Chapter III unfolded the discursive level of the cross and its relevancy for pastoral theology. The two beams of the cross were taken as two constitutive thrusts of Christian theology, which cannot be separated from each other. Christian theology is concerned on the one hand with the vertical dimension of revelation and the other hand with the interwoven net of empirical reality. Both thrusts are distinct from each other, yet deeply related to each other in Christ.

Two major directions in pastoral theology were introduced: the kerygmatic view and the empirical view. The former emphasizes the aspect of pastoral theology which focuses primarily on a direct encounter between God and persons. Proclamation and distance are its significant attributes. The empirical orientation in pastoral theology emphasizes primarily communicative and relational aspects between persons and between persons and environment.

In the light of the theological center of the cross, both directions of pastoral theology are of equal importance. Both are valid by emphasizing one distinct thrust of pastoral shepherding. Yet, only both together make up the whole matrix of pastoral theology. Both are in creative tension with each other, each contributing to the

other and at the same time correcting it.

Chapter IV highlighted the dynamic aspects of the cross on the empirical level. It was pointed out that the cross is not merely a static term, an idea, or a logical principle, but that it rather embraces a movement and process. This movement can be described in theological terms, but also in terms of recent psychotherapy.

Three key terms were used to describe each of three stages in this process. The first state is a holding on to some means of finite justification born out of distrust. By this persons try to avoid facing finiteness, turning themselves or something finite into god. Psychologically this is described as interruption of the fullness of one's experience. This is accepted, but confronted by the crucified Christ who trustingly let go by following fully the call of God. This was a painful act, but his trust was not disappointed as the resurrection events proclaim. Counseling has demonstrated that the way to wholeness and growth needs to lead through a surrender of distrust and pretense. Such surrender brings the client to face a deep void and nothingness in her/her life. The ~~the~~ third state brings new life in obedience and trust. Both do not exclude autonomy and maturity, but rather presuppose and need the latter. It is life, guided by the Spirit, which is at the same time active and passive, adult and obedient. Such a life has been transformed. In counseling the growth

of new life can be prepared, but not effected. The client depends on a force beyond his will. Psychology calls this force the "self," but this discipline reaches here its inherent limits.

Both Christianity and counseling have at their center a paradox which states that new life, growth, salvation will come to the person if he/she is willing to become fully what he/she really is at the moment. This paradox of growth is historically and symbolically confessed in the cross of the resurrected Christ. Recent psychotherapy, also, has emphasized this paradox.

The following paragraphs will draw some of the conclusions which follow from the preceding explorations.

THE IDENTITY OF THE PASTORAL COUNSELOR

This study contains material which is of a preliminary nature. It is intended to present an introduction to pastoral theology by highlighting the field from a central perspective.¹ As such the study arrives at conclusions which can serve in helping the pastoral counselor in his/her search for a clearer identity as theologian and counselor.

Even though professional identity is in this context not primarily of interest as individual, psycho-social

¹See above, p. 25.

phenomenon, certain observations from this realm can help clarify the problem at hand. Erik H. Erikson names in this respect several elements of significance: a conscious feeling of separate, individual identity, a striving for personal continuity of character, a conscious attempt to integrate different aspects of self, and an inner solidarity with the ideals and identity of a group.² He points explicitly to the identity of a group which offers a frame of reference to individual identity. I am convinced that such group identity needs to meet similar criteria as individual identity:

- (1) It needs to integrate separate identifications and to structure different, often contradictory experiences;
- (2) It needs to have a perception of its own continuity;
- (3) It needs to share a common language and a common name;
- (4) And it needs to be able to identify its own "gestalt" and place it into a larger context.³

Pastoral counseling can be understood as such a group with a distinct identity. To this identity are

²Erik Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: International Universities Press, 1959), p. 102.

³See Richard Riess, Seelsorge - Orientierung, Analysen, Alternativen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), p. 85.

contributing identials⁴ from three distinct areas: (1) other theological disciplines; (2) the sciences of persons (particularly human development, psychotherapy, and counseling), and (3) its own history and research.

The cross as central perspective can serve as an identity forming element. This thesis has demonstrated that the cross as a theological concept is able to relate to the different identials contributing to pastoral theology. At the same time it does not merely add these together producing a sum of all identials. It transforms them in the process so that a unique identity is the end result. Yet in the process it establishes the wholeness of the identity by fruitfully integrating its different parts, thus forming its unique gestalt. Knowledge of the cross as central perspective cannot replace the individual pastoral counselor's search for his/her own unique identity, but it can offer him/her a frame of reference for this endeavor.

The following paragraphs will point out some aspects of this identity.

⁴The term "idental" was coined by David J. De Levita, Der Begriff der Identitat (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971), pp. 210ff. There it is used to describe those given identity factors which contribute to identity.

THE THEOLOGICAL IDENTIALS OF THE PASTORAL COUNSELOR

The cross encourages the pastoral counselor to actively pursue and claim those identials which other theological disciplines, particularly kerygma-centered theology, offer to him/her.

False Alternatives

Often kerygma-oriented inquiry and empirical research are perceived as two alternative ways of study. Paul Tillich has stated well the goal of theology when he writes: "The object of theology is what concerns us ultimately. Only those propositions are theological which deal with their object in so far as it can become a matter of ultimate concern for us."⁵ Yet one of the consequences which he draws from this definition has been quite negative for a theology which deals to a large part with empirical data. He writes:

If nothing is an object of theology which does not concern us ultimately, theology is unconcerned about scientific procedures and results and vice versa. Theology has no right and no obligation to prejudice a physical or historical, sociological or psychological inquiry. And no result of such an inquiry can be directly productive or disastrous for theology.⁶

Theology and empirical sciences appear in this definition

⁵Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), I, 12.

⁶Ibid., I, 18.

as two separate, mutually exclusive ways of inquiry. This separation of ultimate and preliminary concerns is logical, but the cross breaks through this logic of finite reason. It asserts that the penultimate and the ultimate cannot be separated since the ultimate has chosen the penultimate and appears within the ambiguities of life.

Ultimate Concern

The cross reminds the pastoral counselor of the fact that he/she and the client together face the ultimate reality as a third. The Christian faith confesses that all reality in its endeavors for new life is dependent on the creating power of God. This awareness distinguishes the pastoral counselor from other therapists. The "religious element" is not merely an additional tool this counselor utilizes in addition to all other tools available to secular counselors. This misunderstanding could occur if the religious element in pastoral counseling were limited merely to the use of "religious resources." The ultimate needs to permeate all pastoral acts and needs to be everpresent in all possible preliminary concerns of the "here" and "now" counseling situation.

Revelation and Concealment

Ultimate and penultimate are in a mutual relationship of concealment and revelation. Luther has pointed to

this aspect of the cross.⁷ The majesty of God is revealed in the resurrection, but human eyes perceive it in the concealment of the cross. The penultimate reveals its cross to scientific inquiry, but in it concealed lies the resurrecting power of God. This is the major distinction between a pastoral and a secular counselor. The pastoral counselor perceives the empirical data as data containing a mystery. They point for his/her eyes and ears to some power beyond, some ultimate power which he/she calls God. This mystery has been revealed in the Christ event. Pastoral counseling, therefore, cannot be done without the clarifying light which is shed from the perspective of the cross on human situations.

At this junction the way must be parted with all useful tools of psychotherapy, also Gestalt therapy. This psychological school has informed pastoral theology fundamentally about the paradoxical nature of change. Yet from its perimeters it is unable to perceive this paradox as a concealment of the way Christ is with persons today. From the perspective of the cross, the pastoral theologian can perceive therapeutic insights and techniques as something penultimate without denying its relevance even for the ultimate.

⁷See above, p. 132.

THE PASTORAL IDENTIALS OF THE
PASTORAL COUNSELOR

The cross as central perspective aids the pastoral counselor in integrating those identials stemming from his pastoral functions as worship director, teacher, and administrator. It prevents pastoral counseling from leading an existence separate from these other pastoral activities.

The cross needs a confessing community which transmits, celebrates, and organizes its varying aspects. It is not merely a theological concept, but an alive symbolic reality which calls for liturgical remembrance, pious celebration and communal confession. Within this context the cross points toward the mystery of a God who served persons first.

Pastoral counseling in the perspective of the cross is a function of this community. The cross reminds the pastoral counselor, that individual and group change and growth are vitally necessary in a world full of private and public pain. Yet, it also affirms the Christian conviction that such change and healing needs to be preceded, accompanied, and followed by an explicit celebration of the fact that people are being served and nourished by God first. The pastoral counselor is called to affirm and accept for him/herself and for the community that God took away the painful past, human guilt, shortcomings, and sin, that he heaped it upon himself and thus freed persons from

themselves. Pastoral counseling will become without substance if it does not have the humility and courage to allow God to serve persons first.

Celebrating

Pastoral counseling needs the context of an active, worshipping community. A pastoral counselor is not always in a position to relate that which happened in counseling explicitly to the everpresent ultimate concern. Sometimes counseling needs to be silent about the ultimate since the penultimate is absorbing all available energy. A pastor can allow him/herself a relaxed attitude in this matter if he/she is aware that his/her counseling is surrounded by the witness of a celebrating community. He/she can expect that worship and counseling will form an active environment which mutually enrich and supplement the person and each other. Symbols and ritual of worship are ahead of the believer and will throw a new, often non-verbal light on particular experience.

Teaching

The cross has become the symbol which transmits faith and that life-orientation which follows it. It is not a common law of life, but it points to that one particular story as the hermeneutic key of human existence. It is, therefore, of importance that this story is retold

and actualized in its relevancy for today. It uncovers the hidden roots of our suffering and frees us for new possibilities of life in faith, hope and love. Again, pastoral counseling cannot and need not perform this task of teaching. It can rest content with the knowledge that its endeavors are accompanied and supplemented by the teaching efforts of the Christian community.

Serving

Pastoral counseling needs to be imbedded in the totality of Christian life, in remembering, hearing and acting the cross. Christ himself was despised, lonely and anxious and calls people to solidarity with those who are disadvantaged, exploited, and oppressed. In the perspective of the cross pastoral counseling cannot be seen as an alternative to or replacement of social change and outreach. Rather, both supplement and need each other. Both are valid and necessary forms of obedience to the cross.

THE THERAPEUTIC IDENTIALS OF THE PASTORAL COUNSELOR

The cross challenges the pastoral counselor to grow into a therapeutic person by training in specific counseling situations. He/she needs to immerse him/herself deeply in actual ongoing relationships and bring into these

specialized learning from related scientific fields of interest. The cross does not favor one particular approach to counseling, but it emphasizes certain elements which need to be present.

Honesty

The cross invites persons to face honestly who they actually are. It does this in the context of deep love. Nevertheless, the cross is judgement of wishful thinking, illusions about self and other. It requires of the minister and the client the courage to overcome the deeply ingrained assumption that one may not be real in a religious atmosphere. Both are invited to pay particular attention to those "dark" aspects in human lives which perpetuate guilt and resentment and prevent emotional and spiritual growth.

Pain

The cross points to pain as an integral part of living and growing. Our time is characterized by the ever increasing search for continuous happiness, joy, and comfort. Counseling is often guilty of adding to the exploitation of this desire. The pastoral counselor is called to resist that tendency and to pay extra attention to those innumerable persons who cannot overcome all their sufferings. The perspective of the cross reopens the

virtues of compassion, patience and silent hope in the face of chronic disability, permanent loss, and unreversible aging and decay. It helps pastor and parishioner to look at these basic human conditions from a higher view that professes: "a thousand years in they sight, O Lord." The pastoral counselor will be able to resist, therefore, some of the shorter lived extremes of the particular current therapeutic scene.

Pastoral counseling in the perspective of the cross helps the client to accept the fact that he/she is involved in a process of which he/she is not ultimately the guide and master. Luther expresses this fact in his words:

This life is not piety, but it is a becoming pious, not healthy, but a becoming healthy, not being, but becoming, not stagnation, but exercise. We are not yet, but we are becoming. It is not done yet, neither has it happened yet, but it is going on and happening. It is not the end, but the way. Not everything sparkles yet, but it is being cleansed.⁸

Growth

Yet, the cross stresses the aspect of surrender without sacrificing the elements of intentionality and

⁸Martin Luther, Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Boehlhaus, 1883-1978), XXXIX, 1, 252.

responsibility in a person's life.⁹ People are asked to accept the unchangeable and to change what they can change to become more able to be conformed to Christ. The cross calls people to maturity and responsibility. Such maturity can be aided by intentionally overcoming certain barriers which block growth. Some of these barriers are: a closed awareness of feelings and experiences within and outside of oneself, a closed memory, a closed fantasy, a closed unconscious, and a closed or confused sense of values and priorities. Contemporary growth counseling has developed apt techniques for training these human potentials. The elements of surrender and intentionality supplement each other in these words of Bonhoeffer:

Man who wants to leave the earth, who wants to escape the difficulties of the present moment, loses the strength which supports him by eternally secret forces. The earth stays our mother, just as God is our father. Only who stays faithful to the mother will be placed by her into the arms of the father. This is the Christian's song about the earth and its pain.¹⁰

⁹Regarding intentional values the minister will soon discover a void in Perls' philosophy. From the perspective of the cross great strengths and serious limitations of Gestalt therapy become obvious. Its concept of self-realization characterized by the words: "a rose is a rose is a rose" neglects some of the basic elements of openness and intentionality in human nature. In contrast to Gestalt self-realization is here understood as "conformation" with Christ.

¹⁰Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Gesammelte Schriften (München: Kaiser, 1958), III, 57-58.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aden, Le Roy (ed.) The Dialogue Between Theology and Psychology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.
- Althaus, Paul. Die Theologie Martin Luthers. 2. Aufl. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1963.
- Assagioli, Roberto. Psychosynthesis. New York: Viking Press, 1971.
- Berne, Eric. Games People Play. 2nd ed. New York: Grove Press, 1967.
- Bethge, Eberhard. Dietrich Bonhoeffer. München: Kaiser, 1971.
- Bitter, Wilhelm (ed.) Die Wandlungen des Menschens. Göttingen: Verlag für medizinische Psychologie, 1956.
- Boisen, Anton. Out of the Depth. New York: Harper & Row, 1960.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. Creation and Temptation. London: SCM Press, 1966.
- _____. Ethics. New York: Macmillan, 1955.
- _____. Gesammelte Schriften. Hrgs. von Eberhard Bethge. 3 Bde. München: Kaiser, 1958.
- _____. Letters and Papers from Prison, ed. by Eberhard Bethge. 2d ed. New York: Macmillan, 1973.
- Bornkamm, Gunter. Das Ende des Gesetzes. München: Kaiser, 1952.
- _____. Paulus. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1969.
- _____. Studien zu Antike und Urchristentum. München: Kaiser, 1963.
- Browning, Don S. Atonement and Psychotherapy. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966.
- _____. "New Trends in Pastoral Care: The Search for Method in Religious Living," Christian Century, XC (September 5, 1973), 849-851.

Bultmann, Rudolf. Das Verhältnis des urchristlichen Christusbotschaft zum historischen Jesus (Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie, 3) Heidelberg: Winter, 1960.

_____. Glauben und Verstehen. 2 Bde. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954.

_____. Theologie des Neuen Testaments. 4. Aufl. Tübingen: Mohn, 1964.

Campbell, Joseph. The Hero with a Thousand Faces. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

_____. The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology. New York: Viking Press, 1964.

_____. The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology. New York: Viking Press, 1954.

Clebsch, William A., and Charles R. Jaekle. Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective. 2d ed. Boston: Harper & Row, 1967.

Clinebell, Howard J., Jr. Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966.

_____. Mental Health Through Christian Community. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965.

Conzelmann, Hans (ed.) Zur Bedeutung des Todes Jesu. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1967.

DeLevita, David J. Der Begriff der Identität. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971.

Delling, Günter (ed.) Apophoreta, Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen. Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964.

Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. 3. Aufl. 7 Bde. Tübingen: Mohn, 1957-65.

Dinkler, Eduard. Signum Crucis. Tübingen: Mohr, 1967.

Dinkler, Erich (ed.) Zeit und Geschichte, Festschrift für Rudolf Bultmann. Tübingen: Mohr, 1964.

Erikson, Erik. Identity and the Life Cycle (Psychological Issues, I, Monograph 1) New York: International Universities Press, 1959.

- Fagan, Joen, and Irma Lee Shephard (eds.) Gestalt Therapy Now. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.
- Finegan, Jack. The Archaeology of the New Testament. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Fordham, Frieda. An Introduction to Jung's Psychology. 3d ed. Baltimore: Penguin, 1973.
- Freud, Siegmund. Therapy and Technique. New York: Collier, 1963.
- Georgi, Dieter. Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief. Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964.
- Graves, Kersey. The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors, or Christianity Before Christ. 6th ed. New York: Truth Seekers, 1960.
- Hiltner, Seward. Preface to Pastoral Theology. New York: Abingdon Press, 1958.
- Homans, Peter. Theology after Freud, an Interpretive Inquiry. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970.
- Horney, Karen. Neurosis and Human Growth. New York: Norton, 1950.
- Jacobi, Jolande. The Psychology of C. G. Jung. 7th ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971.
- James, Muriel M. Born to Love, Transactional Analysis in the Church. Reading, NY: Addison-Wesley, 1973.
- _____ and Louis M. Savary. The Power at the Bottom of the Well. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- Jetter, Werner. Symbol und Ritual. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978.
- Jung, Carl Gustav. Psychology and Religion, West and East. New York: Pantheon, 1958.
- Kaehler, Ernst (ed.) Nachgelassene Reden und Aufsätze. Berlin: Töpelmann, 1952.
- Käsemann, Ernst. Essays on New Testament Themes. Naperville: Allenson, 1964.
- _____. Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen. 2 Bde. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960.

- _____. New Testament Questions of Today. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969.
- _____. Paulinische Perspektiven. Tübingen: Mohr, 1969.
- Kapleau, Phillip. Die drei Pfeiler des Zen. München: Barth, 1975.
- Kittel, Gerhard (ed.) Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament. 10 Bde. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933-78.
- Klappert, Bernd. Diskussion um Kreuz und Auferstehung. Wuppertal: Aussaat, 1967.
- Koester, Helmut. "The Purpose of a Paulinic Fragment." New Testament Studies, VIII (1962), 317-332.
- Lapsley, James N. Salvation and Health. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972.
- Latner, Joel. The Gestalt Therapy Book. New York: Bantam, 1973.
- Link, Walter. Das Ringen Luthers um die Freiheit der Theologie von der Philosophie. München: Kaiser, 1955.
- Loewenich, Walter von. Luthers Theologia Crucis. 5. Aufl. Witten: Luther, 1967.
- Luther, Martin. Early Theological Works (Library of Christian Classics, 16) Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962.
- _____. Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe. 54 Bde. Weimar: Boehlhaus, 1883-1978.
- Marxsen, Willi. Der Exeget als Theologe. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1968.
- Maslow, Abraham H. Toward a Psychology of Being. New York: Van Norstrand Reinhold, 1968.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. Der gekreuzigte Gott. München: Kaiser, 1972.
- Moore, Allen. "The Place of Scientific Models and Theological Reflection in the Practice of Ministry," Pastoral Psychology, XXII: 210 (January 1971), 25-34.
- Neumann, Erich. The Great Mother. New York: Pantheon, 1955.

- Oden, Thomas C. Kerygma and Counseling. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966.
- "Paradox," in Das Grosse Brockhaus: Enzyklopaedie. Stuttgart: Brockhaus, 1955. VIII, 736.
- Perls, Frederick S. Gestalt Therapy Verbatim. Lafayette, CA: Real People Press, 1969.
- Riemann, Fritz. Grundformen der Angst, eine tiefenpsychologische Studie. 4. Aufl. München: Ullstein, 1969.
- Riess, Richard. Seelsorge - Orientierung, Analysen, Alternativen. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973.
- Rogers, Carl. On Becoming a Person, a Therapist's View of Psychotherapy. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1961.
- Roloff, Jürgen (ed.) Die Heilsbedeutung von Kreuz und Auferstehung Jesu Christi. Berlin: Luther, 1970.
- Rosenberg, Alfons. Kreuzmeditation. München: Kösel, 1973.
- Schlier, Heinrich. Der Brief an die Galater. 3. Aufl. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965.
- Schmithals, Walter. Gnosticism in Corinth. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971.
- _____. Paulus und die Gnostiker. Hamburg: Reich, 1965.
- Schweizer, Eduard. Erniedrigung und Erhöhung bei Jesus und seinen Nachfolgern. Zürich: Zwingli, 1955.
- Smith, Ronald (ed.) World Come of Age. London: Collins, 1967.
- Steffen, Uwe. Das Mysterium von Tod und Auferstehung. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963.
- Strecker, Georg. "Redaktion und Tradition im Christus-hymnus Phil. 2:6-11." Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, LV (1964), 63-78.
- Tillich, Paul. Systematic Theology. 2d ed. 3 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.
- Thornton, Edward E. Theology and Pastoral Counseling. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964.
- Thurneysen, Eduard. Seelsorge und Psychotherapie in (Theologische Existenz Heute, n.f. 25) München: Kaiser, 1950.

Viering, Fritz (ed.) Das Kreuz Jesu Christi als Grund des Heils. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1967.

Wegenast, Klaus. Das Verständnis der Tradition bei Paulus und den Deuteropaulinen. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962.

Wengst, Klaus. Christologische Formel und Lieder des Urchristentums. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1972.

Wilckens, Ulrich. Weisheit und Torheit. Tübingen: Mohr 1959.

Zur Mühlen, Karl-Heinz. Nos extra nos, Luthers Theologie zwischen Mystik und Scholastik. Tübingen: Mohn, 1972.